



DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE PLAN

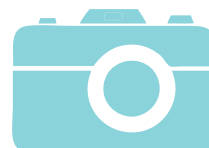
THE NEXT 10 YEARS



Final Draft Report
April 2015



City of Raleigh
Downtown Raleigh Alliance
Sasaki Associates, Inc.
HR&A Advisors
Kimley-Horn and Associates
Jacobs Engineering Group





This plan would not have been possible without the efforts of all the citizens who took part in the process and contributed their ideas and insights; the dedicated Downtown Plan Advisory Committee, appointed by City Council; sponsors who helped fund the effort; the consultants who brought their expertise and creativity to bear; and the City of Raleigh interdepartmental team, including the Urban Design Center and Downtown Raleigh Alliance staff who worked seamlessly with the consultant team to collect the vast inventory, create the public engagement strategy, and organize and facilitate the public events that attracted more than 1,000 Raleigh stakeholders. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it.



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For additional information about the Raleigh Downtown Experience Plan see the [CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES REPORT](#) on [raleighnc.gov](#).



1

THE VISION

CHAPTER ONE

THE VISION

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Raleigh is thriving. At no time in the city's history has the downtown welcomed so many people to such a diverse banquet of cultural events, job opportunities, dining choices, living arrangements, and experiences. With the days of decline now firmly in the past, stakeholders now agree that downtown's best years lie ahead. It is against this backdrop that the plan you are now reading has been prepared.

The last time the community undertook a big plan for downtown was in 2003 with the Livable Streets Plan, which had a heavy focus on the Fayetteville Street spine. The five key recommendations from that plan have been substantially completed, and today downtown Raleigh looks very different than it did 11 years ago. Now downtown is facing different challenges and opportunities, and therefore this is a very different type of plan, one that recognizes all that has changed since 2003. This plan goes beyond the Fayetteville Street spine to create an overall framework with which downtown is planned to develop and grow for many years to come.

In 2003, the Livable Streets Plan breathed new life into long-debated ideas like building a convention center and reopening Fayetteville Street. Much like that plan, many of the next big project ideas are already in front of us. The fruits of recent plans and studies, such as Raleigh Union Station, the major renovation of Moore Square Park and Transit

Station, Devereux Meadows Park and Greenway, and the extension of West Street north and south, are all integrated into this plan. Collectively they will have a major impact on the future of Raleigh.

The plan adds some significant new ideas to the mix, including the transformation of Nash Square and its surroundings, creating new north-south green corridors, and rethinking the street network in the south end of downtown to facilitate a bold new development vision for the area adjacent to the performing arts complex south of South Street. Knitting it all together are four big themes—Breathe, Move, Stay, and Link—that show how to bring nature to the city, provide transportation choices, create a place to linger and savor, and cultivate the partnerships necessary to make it all happen. These themes are given physical form in the downtown districts, each receiving a Catalytic Project Area to transform Raleigh's urban core.

Cities exist to create proximity and serendipity. The logic of urbanization is that stuff is more valuable and productive when it's next to other stuff. Therefore, a thriving city is more than the sum of its parts; it is a machine for generating abundance. As downtown Raleigh fills in the gaps and creates new connections, it will create an abundance of opportunity, interaction, choices, and experiences. This plan sets forth the next steps for making downtown a magnet for people of all kinds to achieve their desires and aspirations.

THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN RALEIGH

Throughout the many public meetings, workshops, and online interaction, several consistent themes emerged. These include an emphasis on creating great experiences; focusing on how downtown can work equally well for residents, workers and visitors, the need for inclusion, such that downtown benefits everyone, not just a few; and innovation and entrepreneurship as the foundation for future downtown success that is both vital and authentic.

The Downtown Experience Plan Vision Statement incorporates these themes as follows:

“Downtown Raleigh will be an economic engine for the region and a hub for arts, innovation, and creativity. It will provide the physical spaces and places to support the activities of entrepreneurs, artists, and businesses large and small. It will be a destination where people from around the region come to experience culture, entertainment, commerce, and community. Downtown Raleigh will be an urban neighborhood providing opportunities for households of varied age and incomes, from singles to families, to lead healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives. The streets, buildings, and public realm of downtown will be a proving ground for integrating nature and environmental stewardship into the urban environment, using the latest innovations in transportation and green infrastructure.”



PLAN FRAMEWORK

This Vision Statement is ambitious. How to make it real is the focus of the remainder of the report. Four Framework Themes have been developed which elaborate on the vision and contain specific goals and actions necessary to implement the theme. The Framework Themes are detailed in Chapter 2 and summarized below:

BREATHE: A Greener Raleigh - *Twenty-first century public open space where people can pause and breathe, gather, and relax within the city.* This theme supports the vision for an urban neighborhood and environmental stewardship.

MOVE: Create Connections - *Make walking, biking and transit the preferred ways to get in and around downtown Raleigh.* This theme supports both the goal of greater sustainability along with the vision for a thriving center of commerce and innovation, by emphasizing transportation access and modes that promote urban density, serendipity and interaction.

STAY: Revitalization & Redevelopment - *Realize downtown's potential as a dynamic city-center neighborhood anchoring tourism, entertainment, and culture.* This theme supports the vision for downtown as a regional destination for great experiences, arts, and culture.

LINK: Network & Partner - *Align with institutional, public, and private partners to bring downtown's shared vision to life.* This theme supports the entire vision by putting partnerships at the center of implementation.

The elements of the Vision Statement and Framework Themes are given physical form through a series of five Catalytic Project Areas, which are illustrated in Chapter 3. These five areas were chosen as the most strategic locations where public and private interventions could have a transformative impact on downtown Raleigh. The five Catalytic Project Areas are as follows:

GATEWAY CENTER: A large-scale convention, tourism, employment, and entertainment destination. Leveraging the Raleigh Convention Center, Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, and growing hotel infrastructure makes the south end of downtown the ideal location for civic and destination uses that welcome large numbers of visitors. This is also the only area

where sites exist that can accommodate large-footprint uses.

NORTH END: Completing an urban neighborhood. In contrast to the large-scale redevelopment contemplated on the south end, the vision for the North End fills the gaps between existing assets to create a complete neighborhood that combines new housing options with unique local retail and dining along North Person Street and in Seaboard Station.

MOORE SQUARE: Great civic spaces in the heart of the city. Moore Square's assets, already unique in the city, will grow even stronger after the square is renovated. With the Marbles Kids Museum and IMAX theater, the north side of the square is already among the top destinations for families. To the west, the soon to be redesigned and rehabilitated Moore Square Transit Station will deliver thousands of riders a day to the area. To the south, the revitalized City Market will provide one of the region's most unique shopping experiences. To the east, new mixed-use development will anchor the square and make it a premier address in downtown.

NASH SQUARE/RALEIGH UNION STATION: Where transportation, innovation, and gracious public space connect. The Warehouse District is organically emerging as downtown's innovation hub, driven by entrepreneurs and artists operating at a scale from the small startup (HQ Raleigh), to the growing company (Raleigh Denim), to the major employer (Citrix). CAM and a plethora of galleries make it an arts destination. It will be bookended by two major civic amenities. Nash Square, the other historic downtown square, will evoke the stately poise of historic Raleigh; while Raleigh Union Station will create Raleigh's great new 21st century gathering space.

GLENWOOD GREEN: Downtown's most well-known district gains depth. The thriving Glenwood South district is mostly clustered on Glenwood Avenue, and the commercial uses are heavily tilted towards nightlife. Reaching across the tracks to West and Harrington Street, this area is ideal to accommodate significant new residential development, leveraging two significant public improvements: the replacement and redesign of the Capital and Peace interchange and bridge; and the creation

of a new linear park and greenway trail along the Pigeon House Branch in Devereux Meadows.

The Framework Themes and Catalytic Project Areas cannot come to fruition without extensive public-private partnerships and a commitment for funding and financing those improvements necessary to catalyze and support new development. Chapter 4 lays out the implementation strategy for the Downtown Experience Plan. It focused on three key areas: (1) activating the Warehouse District around a revitalized Nash Square; (2) developing a framework for building out the Fayetteville District at Gateway Center; and (3) strengthening downtown Raleigh's retail environment. Under each of these are specific actions regarding funding, governance, roles and responsibilities, and tools to recruit key uses to downtown.

ENGAGING PEOPLE

An extensive public engagement process combining new and trusted techniques was utilized to encourage a diverse group of citizens to contribute to the plan, including public meetings and workshops, a robust online presence, and an Advisory Committee to help guide the process. Opportunities to participate included large public meetings to small stakeholder roundtables, online surveys, project web page updates, MindMixer social media engagement, email notifications, YouTube videos, and Twitter posts. Each method

encouraged the public to learn and convey their opinions on what was important for the city to consider over the next 10 years.

Public meetings and workshops included an initial kick-off meeting; a downtown-wide Visioning meeting; six District Visioning meetings; and a presentation of the draft report and recommendations. An estimated thousand-plus individuals attended these meetings, contributing ideas and insight.

Members of the Downtown Plan Advisory Committee, appointed by the Raleigh City Council, advised the City and the Downtown Raleigh Alliance on the Downtown Experience Plan formulation. Its membership represented a broad cross-section of 33 downtown stakeholders. The Committee met at key points of the project to review progress and interim documents and presentations, including drafts of this final report.

Online participation was equally extensive and captured an audience that doesn't typically attend public meetings; 36% of the participants were 25-34 years old. PlanningForRaleigh.com, the City's social media application, garnered over 18,000 views and 6,000 unique visits during the process. Over 625 individuals registered with the MindMixer site, contributing 343 ideas which were short listed through a popular process of online voting. Lastly, regular updates were delivered to the 10,000 subscribers to the Downtown Raleigh Alliance's regular newsletter.

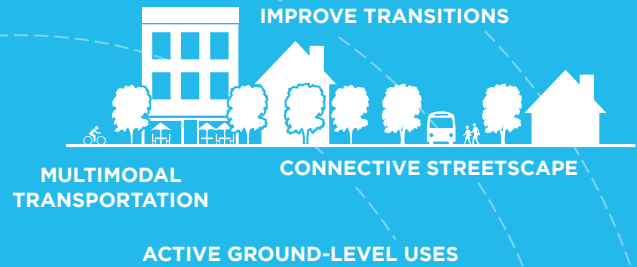
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE PLAN

- **1,000+ attendees** at Public and Stakeholder meetings:
 - Public Kick-off
180 people
 - Downtown Visioning meeting
200 people
 - District Visioning meetings
325 people
- Draft Downtown Experience Plan presentation
250 people
- **18,000+ views** on PlanningForRaleigh.com, the City's social media application
- **6,000+ unique visitors** on PlanningForRaleigh.com
- **10,000 subscribers** to the DRA newsletter

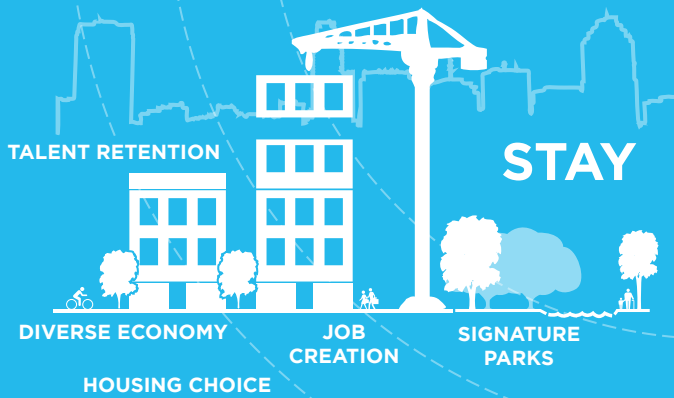
BREATHE



MOVE



Raleigh Experience



2

FRAMEWORK THEMES

BREATHE

A Greener Raleigh

Twenty-first century public open space where people can pause and breathe, gather and relax within the city.

MOVE

Create Connections

Make walking, biking and transit the preferred ways to get in and around downtown Raleigh.

STAY

Revitalization & Redevelopment

Realize downtown's potential as a dynamic city-center neighborhood anchoring tourism, entertainment, and culture.

LINK

Network & Partner

Align with institutional, public, and private partners to bring downtown's shared vision to life.

CHAPTER TWO

FRAMEWORK

THEMES

INTRODUCTION

The Framework Themes of the Downtown Experience Plan advance the Vision Statement by building on historic and contemporary development patterns and the city's underlying topography and environmental opportunities. Focusing on the public realm, infrastructure, and partnerships, the Framework Themes seek to organize public open space, development, and connectivity throughout downtown Raleigh. For each theme, a small set of key Goals and a larger set of implementing Actions are identified.

The Framework Themes of Breathe, Move, Stay, and Link capture these four key ideas:

- Improve, expand, and connect the public open space network.
- Enhance walkability and connectivity, both within downtown and to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Cultivate new development and activity that enhances the character and community of downtown.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with diverse stakeholders and institutions.

BREATHE

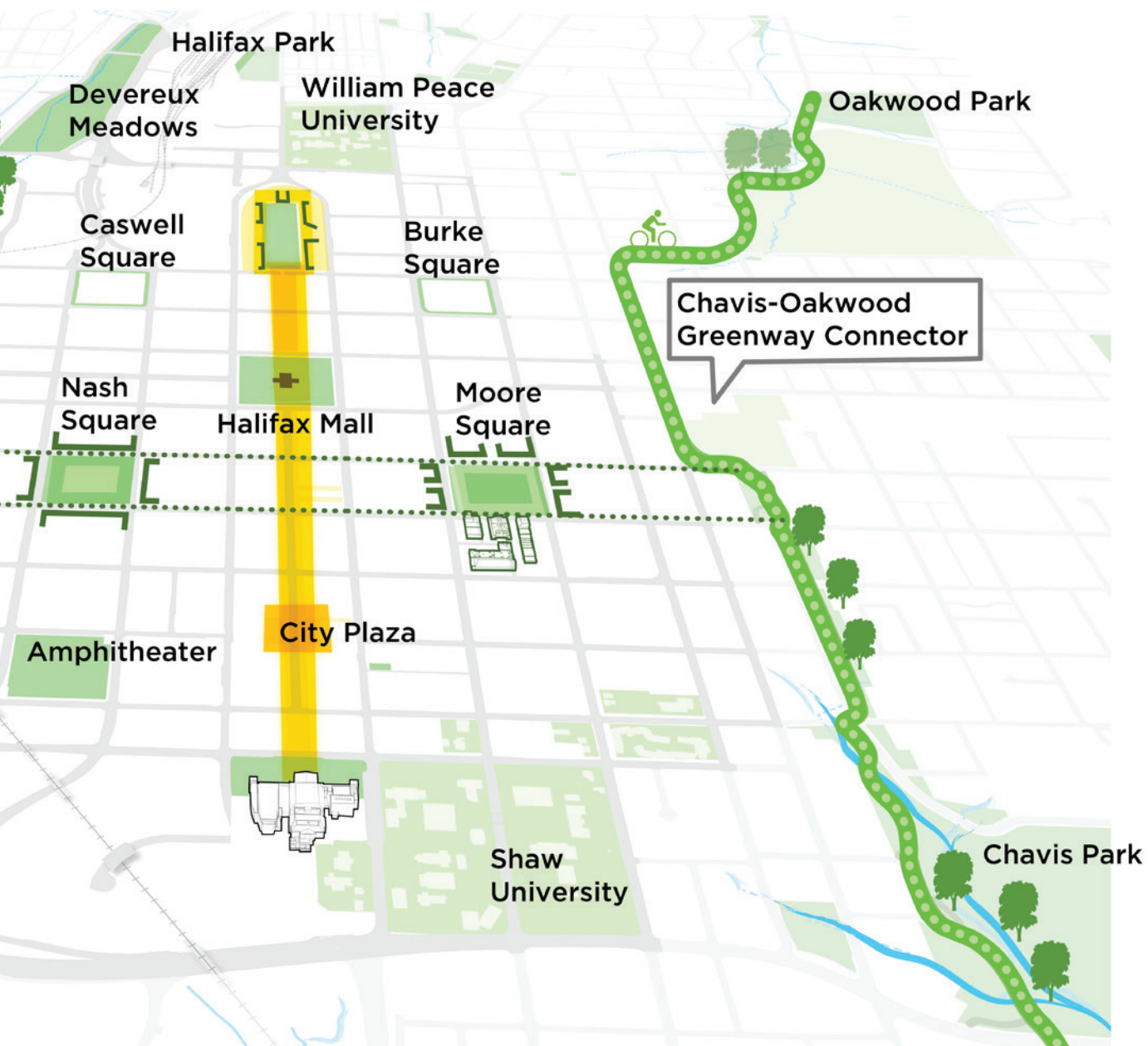
A Greener Raleigh

Twenty-first century public open space where people can pause and breathe, gather, and relax within the city.

Sometimes referred to as the “lungs” of a city, urban parks and public open space play a critical role in downtown. Some parks are quiet respites, offering a chance to push pause, gather and relax within the city. Other parks include more social spaces for gatherings, playing and events. Together downtown’s parks form a green network that helps environmentally by cleaning air and absorbing stormwater. Parks and public open space are urban necessities that attract people to live, work and visit downtown. The goal of “Breathe” is to transform downtown Raleigh into a center for innovative urban parks and appealing public open spaces, improving and activating existing spaces, and expanding access to underserved areas of downtown.

- Primary green street or greenway connector
- Civic / symbolic spine
- Key bicycle connector





PUBLIC OPEN SPACE NETWORK

GOAL

BG-1 Reposition and refurbish downtown's existing parks and green spaces to reflect the growing demand and changing uses for urban open spaces and plazas.

ACTIONS

BA-1 Implement the Moore Square Master Plan to reposition the park for the next generation of park users and better attract new development to the district.

BA-2 Complete the planned renovations of Exchange and Market Plazas.

BA-3 Complete a cultural landscape report for Nash Square prior to initiating a design study.

BA-4 Undertake a design study to re-envision Nash Square as an urban green that supports the growth of the Warehouse and Fayetteville Street Districts and to strengthen their connection.

BA-5 Implement the results of the Nash Square design study.

BA-6 Inventory downtown public spaces available for activities and develop a programming strategy for these spaces.

BA-7 Work in partnership with the State to activate Halifax Mall; explore amenities like a rubberized running track around the mall perimeter (approximately a third of a mile) as a healthy amenity for downtown residents.

BA-8 Study Lichtin Plaza, in front of the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, to establish programming and facility improvements to increase its vitality.

BA-9 Implement the John B. Chavis Park Master Plan and invest in the redesign of the Chavis Greenway to better connect the core of downtown to East Raleigh neighborhoods.

GOAL

BG-2 Create new parks and green spaces in downtown, both large and small, to serve the growing population. Ensuring a variety of spaces are available for residents of all ages

ACTIONS

BA-10 Implement the Devereux Meadows project, including the Pigeon House Branch restoration, which will bring needed green space to Glenwood South and the North End.

BA-11 Identify underutilized sites in the Glenwood South and Warehouse Districts that would be suitable for acquisition and conversion into pocket parks.

BA-12 Explore the conversion of traffic islands and other under utilized portions of right-of-way into green infrastructure or pocket park amenities.

BA-13 Position Raleigh Union Station plaza as an important asset for the Warehouse District through its funding, design, and programming.

BA-14 Work in partnership with the State to explore reclamation of all or a portion of Caswell Square for public use and open space.

BA-15 Continue to explore options with the State to create a new, significant open space on the Dortha Dix property.

BA-16 Redesign West/Peace streets intersections to remove the slip lane and convert to open space.

BA-17 Study the feasibility for the creation of a dog park and/or the accommodation of dogs in downtown public open space.

GOAL

BG-3 Extend the greenway system into downtown and use it to connect and integrate downtown's public open space resources.

ACTIONS

BA-17 Develop two parallel greenway connectors that connect within downtown and to existing and planned trails/parks: Pigeon House Branch to Rocky Branch and Dorthea Dix property and John Chavis Memorial Park to Oakwood Park (growing the existing Chavis Way Greenway to the north).

BA-18 Convert vacant properties between West Street and railroad tracks (adjacent to the future Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor) into a greenway connector to accommodate landscape amenities and a multiuse walkway, connecting Devereux Meadows park and Raleigh Union Station Plaza.

BA-19 Complete the planned Rosengarten Greenway connection to Rocky Branch.

BA-20 Improve bicycle and pedestrian access points from downtown to the Rocky Branch Greenway and the Dorthea Dix property.

BA-21 Extend the Pigeon House Creek restoration south of Peace Street by exploring the opportunity to daylight the creek and make it an amenity in future redevelopment projects.

BA-22 Connect Chavis Park to downtown through a streetscape project along Martin Street.

GOAL

BG-4 Create a sustainable funding and governance structure to ensure the long-term acquisition, creation, and maintenance of downtown parks, plazas, and public open space.

ACTIONS

BA-23 Develop a strategy and funding plan for land acquisition and capital funding. Consider directing the proceeds of the disposition of city-owned sites into acquisition and public realm improvements.

BA-24 Develop an operations and maintenance funding approach for downtown open space to adequately cover the increased need of heavily used public open spaces.

BA-25 Investigate alternative governance structure strategies for downtown public open space.

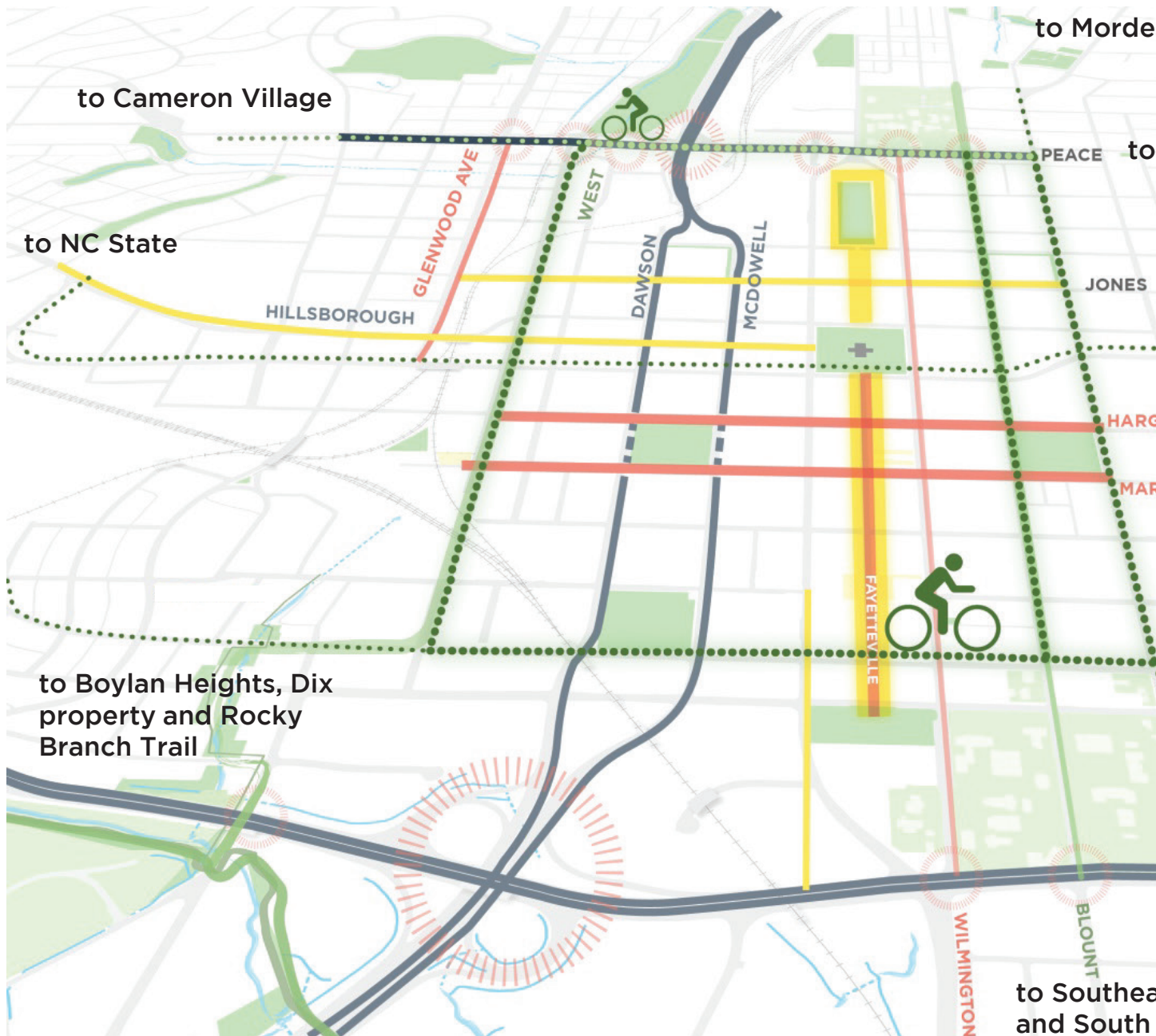
BA-26 Capture value from parks and public improvements by coordinating disposition of city-owned sites nearby public open spaces such as Moore Square, Nash Square, and Devereux Meadows.

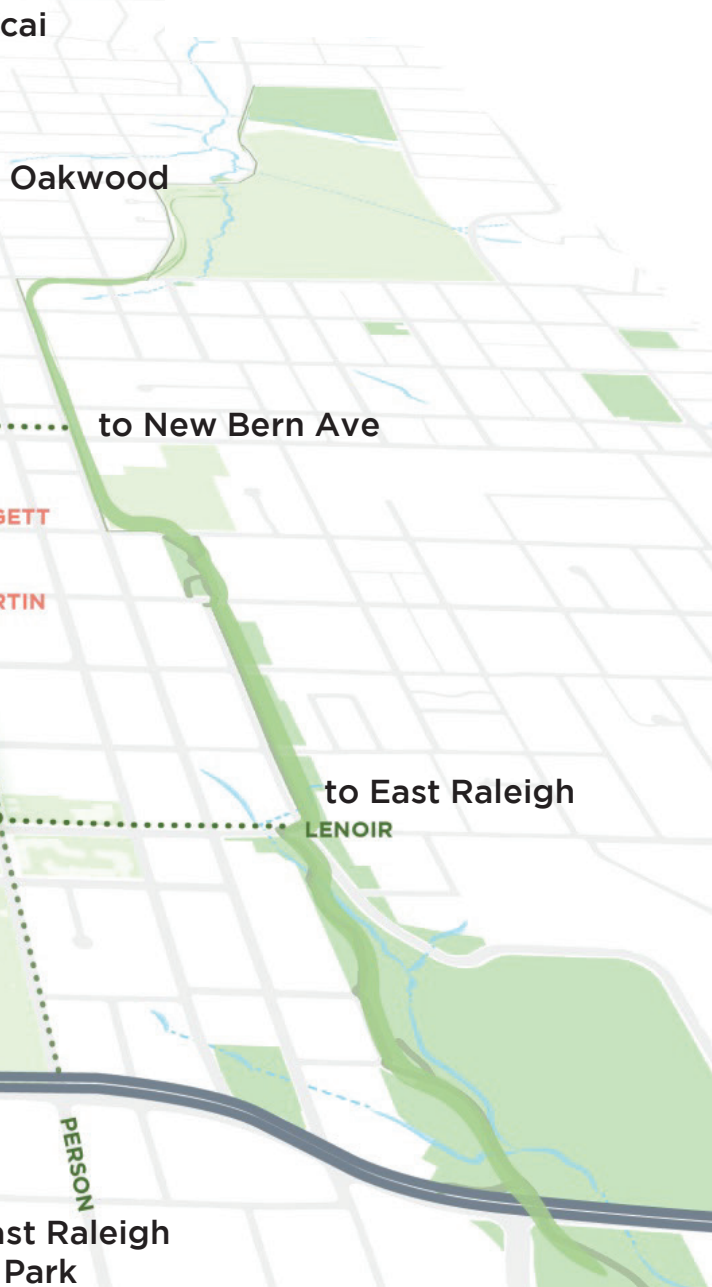
BA-27 Incorporate sustainable practices like recycling, renewable energy, and low-impact development strategies into park and public open space amenities and facilities.

MOVE

Create Connections

Make walking, biking and transit the preferred ways to get in and around downtown Raleigh.





With a compact size and well-connected street grid, downtown Raleigh is physically well-suited for walking and bicycling. The goal of “Move” is to enhance street character and uses along key streets to make walking, biking, and transit the preferred ways to get in and around downtown, while still accommodating automobile traffic. This includes increasing bike infrastructure throughout downtown, improving the pedestrian realm, and upgrading transit service and passenger amenities.

The energy of Fayetteville Street from the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, in the south, extends north to Halifax Mall, creating a civic spine throughout downtown. Hargett and Martin Streets, like Glenwood Avenue, continue to evolve as key pedestrian-oriented retail streets. West, Blount, and Person Streets have become primary cycling streets; coupled with Peace and Lenoir Streets which create a downtown bicycle loop. Dawson, McDowell, Peace, and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard/Western Boulevard remain high-capacity vehicular streets but include improved intersections to provide safe and inviting pedestrian crossings. The R-Line circulates through downtown and complements enhanced GoRaleigh service to provide easy transit access to downtown destinations.

Together, these overlapping networks connect downtown’s distinct districts and encourage visitors, residents, and workers to explore downtown by foot, bicycle, or on a bus.

- Pedestrian-oriented street
- Safe intersection for all modes
- Primary green street or greenway
- Civic / symbolic spine
- Major vehicular street
- ⋯ Key bicycle connection

GOAL

MG-1 Create a complete pedestrian network—one that is well lit, generously sized, and visually attractive—to make accessing all of downtown on foot as safe, inviting, and convenient as possible.

ACTIONS

MA-1 Improve east-west pedestrian connections to enhance connectivity to adjacent districts, focusing on trouble spots such as Peace Street, Lane Street between McDowell and Harrington, and the Hillsborough-Edenton merge.

MA-2 Pursue the connection of West Johnson Street between West and Harrington Streets in conjunction with redevelopment.

MA-3 Focus on Hargett and Martin Streets to create a great walking and retail environment from Raleigh Union Station to Moore Square and beyond.

MA-4 Identify a strategy and investigate routes to better connect Raleigh Union Station to the Warehouse District southwest of Cabarrus Street at the Wye.

MA-5 Establish a dedicated CIP funding stream and/or special assessments for downtown streetscapes.

MA-6 Prioritize and fund the design and implementation of the Peace Street East streetscape from West to Person Streets.

MA-7 Improve the Glenwood Avenue streetscape to better accommodate the number of pedestrians.

MA-8 Address “dark spaces” in downtown through a comprehensive lighting strategy, and include standards in the city’s Street Design Manual.

MA-9 Expand the pedestrian scale wayfinding system.

GOAL

MG-2 Provide on- and off-street bicycle facilities and infrastructure that link all the districts to each other and to the major cycling routes into and out of downtown.

ACTIONS

MA-10 Implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Person, Blount, and Peace Streets to connect downtown to planned greenway connectors along Pigeon House Branch and Capital Boulevard.

MA-11 Prioritize West Street as a north-south greenway connector that will eventually connect to greenways north and south of downtown.

MA-12 Study creating a cycle track along West Street north-south from future park-to-park.

MA-13 Increase bike lanes throughout downtown, notably along Wilmington and Salisbury Streets.

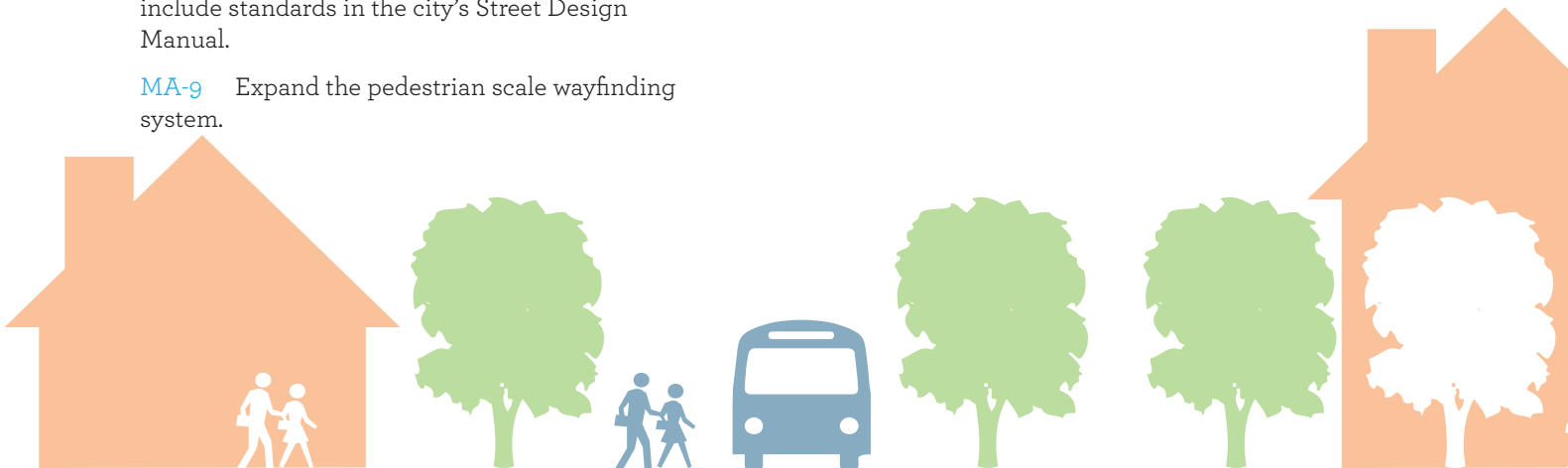
MA-14 Implement a BikeShare program in downtown.

MA-15 Reimagine the Capital City Trail into a multicultural historic bike trail circumnavigating the downtown.

MA-16 Install additional bike corrals in downtown as demand for bike parking grows.

MA-17 Implement specific design and graphic standards to identify and distinguish the Art to Heart Trail as well as the envisioned Capital City Trail.

MA-18 Fund the implementation of the South Park Heritage Trail and connect to other planned trails, creating multiple loop options.



FRAMEWORK THEMES

GOAL

MG-3 Enhance transit service in downtown through service improvements, such as route consolidation, increased frequency, and a better R-Line; and upgraded passenger amenities, including an improved transfer center, benches and shelters, and real-time service information.

ACTIONS

MA-19 Conduct a follow-up study to the 2015 Wake County Transit Investment Strategy that refines and finalizes transit operation and infrastructure investment details in downtown Raleigh.

MA-20 Provide high-quality transit amenities such as shelter, seating, and system information at all downtown transit stops.

MA-21 Modify the R-line route in the short term to reduce time and allow more direct routes to the most frequently used locations.

MA-22 Amplify the use of technology through signage that shows people bus arrival times (either LED live-time signage or a QR code/link to the online app).

MA-23 Identify and direct transit users to transit network nodes with enhanced amenities and increased wayfinding and passenger information.

MA-24 Implement a high quality, aesthetic and functional renovation of the Moore Square Transit Center.

GOAL

MG-4 Accommodate vehicles using a multi-modal grid of complete streets, as well as on- and off-street parking facilities located in areas of high demand.

ACTIONS

MA-25 Implement the recommendations of the Blount Street/Person Street Corridor Plan.

MA-26 Establish a low-impact development (LID) strategy for downtown streets.

MA-27 Restore two-way traffic at Jones and Lane Street in collaboration with NC Department of Administration.

MA-28 Study the realignment of South Salisbury at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

MA-29 Redesign intersections at South Boylan, South Saunders, South Dawson, South Wilmington Streets, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and the intersection at Peace Street and Halifax Street to improve pedestrian safety and reduce barriers to north-south travel.

MA-30 Improve Peace Street's accessibility for all modes of travel both along it and through safe intersections across it.

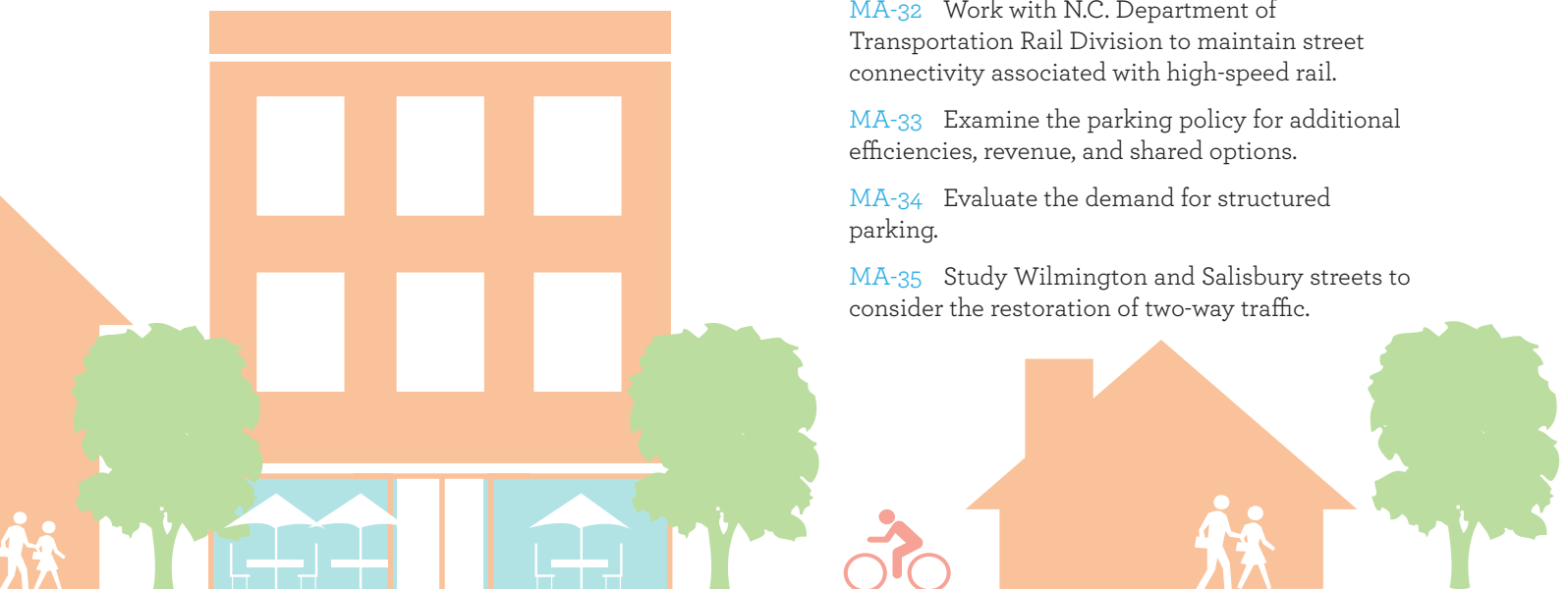
MA-31 Encourage smaller but more numerous public parking facilities in a greater variety of locations downtown by creating a program to partner with developers projects to add public parking to private developments.

MA-32 Work with N.C. Department of Transportation Rail Division to maintain street connectivity associated with high-speed rail.

MA-33 Examine the parking policy for additional efficiencies, revenue, and shared options.

MA-34 Evaluate the demand for structured parking.

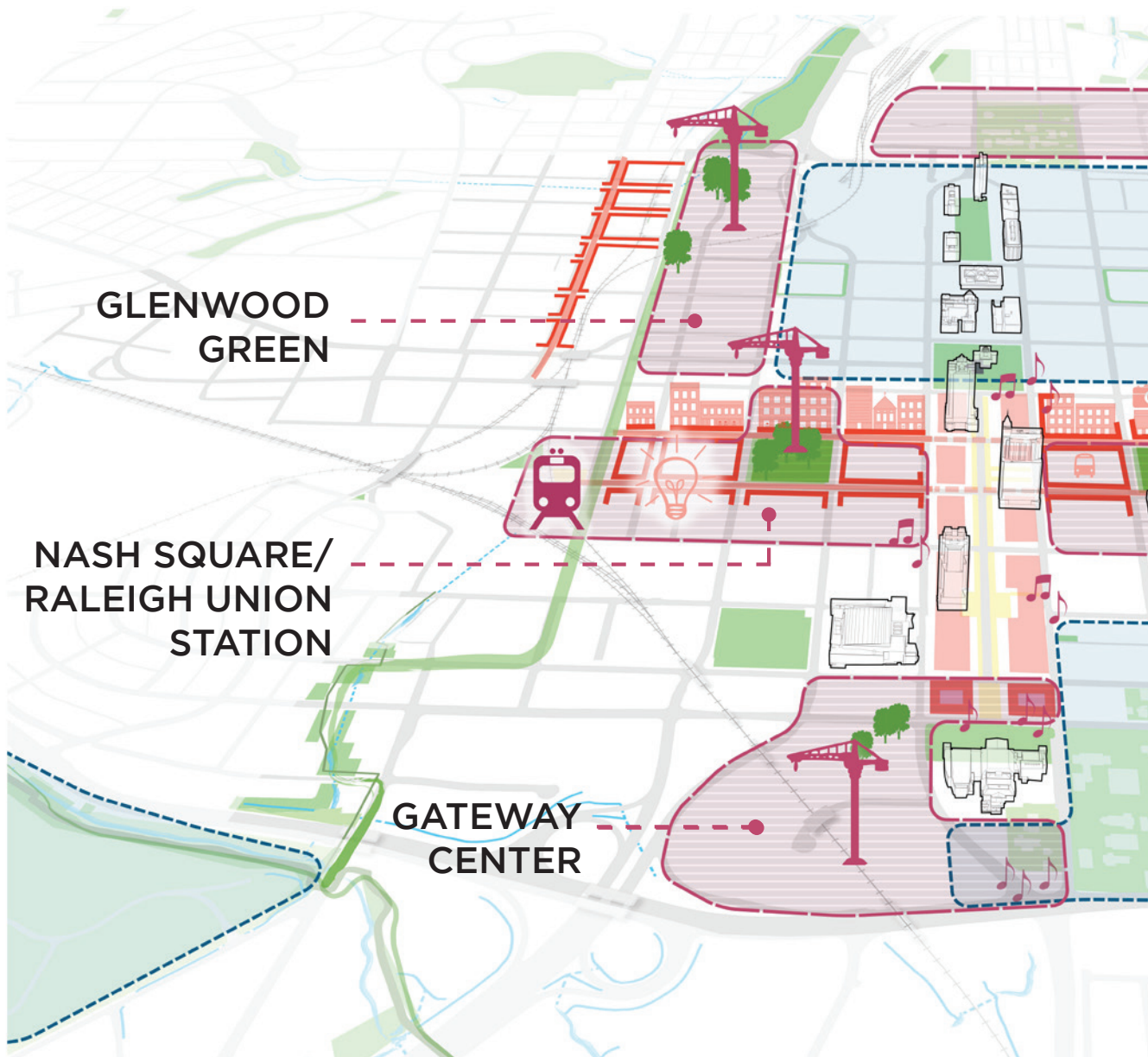
MA-35 Study Wilmington and Salisbury streets to consider the restoration of two-way traffic.



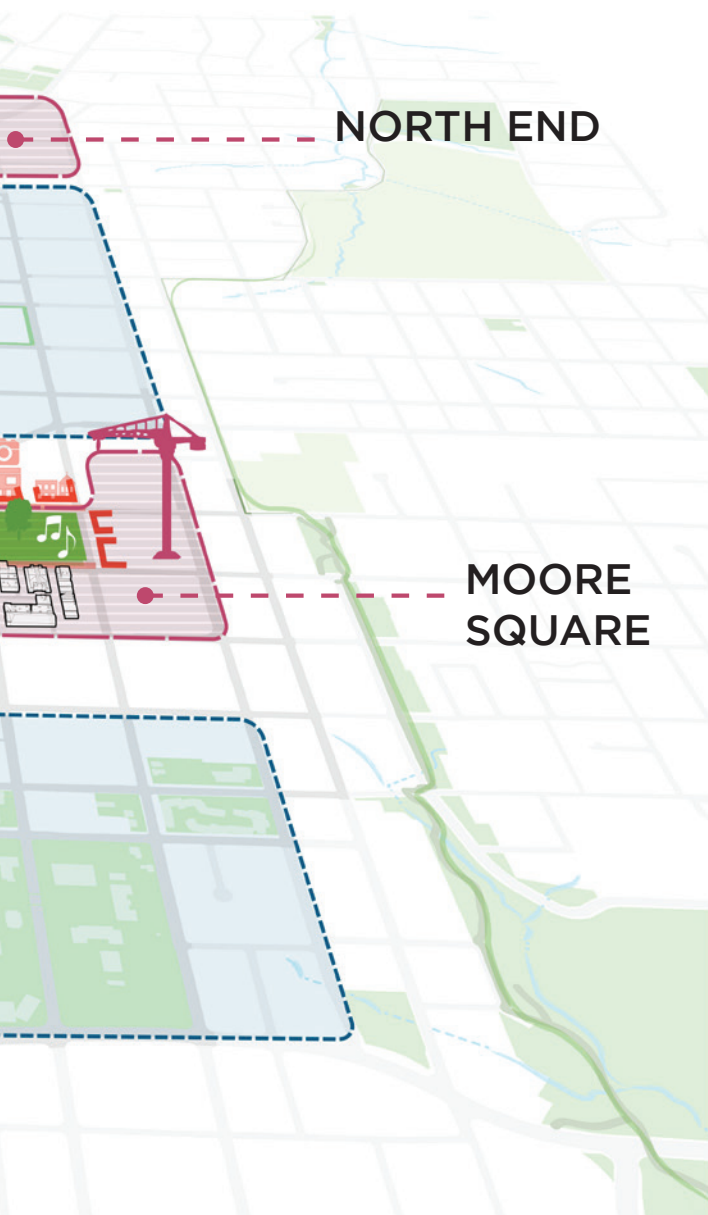
STAY

Revitalization and Redevelopment

Realize downtown's potential as a dynamic regional center anchoring tourism, entertainment, and culture.



FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



New development will support and enhance downtown Raleigh as a dynamic, diverse regional center offering diverse retail amenities and residential options anchored by tourism and culture with appeal across generations. This statement gets to the heart of the “Stay” theme, which looks to make downtown a place where all are welcomed.

Downtown Raleigh is already home to a growing residential base, restaurants, entertainment, office uses, and a growing retail base. Additional service retail and a downtown grocery store were top requests from participants in the planning process. Ensuring downtown has a variety of housing opportunities that are affordable to residents was another common topic of discussion. The unique identities of each of downtown’s different districts will seamlessly blend from one to another, allowing different uses to complement each other and enhance the downtown experience.

GOAL

SG-1 Keep downtown authentic and full of character through historic preservation and adaptive reuse, public art, and high-quality new construction.

ACTIONS

SA-1 Explore incentives to preserve important architecture.

SA-2 Establish design guidelines for districts to guide architectural character of infill development.

SA-3 Use historic and adaptive reuse strategies to expand development while preserving downtown's historic identity.

SA-4 Revisit the local historic Depot District south of Martin Street.

SA-5 Brand districts with significant public art.

GOAL

SG-2 Ensure that downtown remains a clean, safe, and hospitable place to live, work, and visit.

ACTIONS

SA-7 Update standards for Private Use of Public Spaces (PUPS) to incorporate growing hospitality-related issues.

SA-8 Increase funding to expand the Clean and Safe program.

SA-9 Establish a clear strategy and guidelines for special events that utilize downtown streets and open space to minimize the impact to business owners and residents.

SA-10 Explore the adoption of a hospitality management district in other areas of downtown, or modification of the existing amplified entertainment permit program.

SA-11 Ensure funding for sufficient number of police officers commensurate with the growth of downtown is considered in future budgeting.

GOAL

SG-3 Encourage the development of vacant and underbuilt sites so that the entire downtown fills in with active uses over time.

ACTIONS

SA-10 Capitalize on Raleigh Union Station with transit-oriented development in the Warehouse District.

SA-11 For each city-owned site, develop priorities for development, identify the most appropriate disposition method, and create a program for proactively marketing the site.

SA-12 Promote a more efficient use of land by studying appropriate zoning height designations; amend the zoning map accordingly.

SA-13 Remove parking requirements for development sites under 10,000 square feet and buildings under 40,000 square feet to incentivize infill on sites too small to accommodate off-street parking.

GOAL

SG-4 Create a robust retail environment in downtown that expands away from nightlife to include a combination of local and destination retail.

ACTIONS

SA-14 Expand on the existing Downtown Raleigh Alliance retail strategy to target authentic retail services that support downtown's growing residential, employee, and tourist population.

SA-15 Identify a toolkit for retail recruitment, such as a retail-specific fund that functions as a below-market interest loan or grant program that assists with construction and up-fit costs.

SA-16 Explore public-private partnerships to recruit a grocery store and other neighborhood services.

SA-17 Target specific locations for a retail incentive area with streetscape improvements and improved wayfinding, public art installations, and parklets.

SA-18 Encourage pop-up cafes and shops, food trucks, and mobile vendors to activate more isolated parts of the retail corridors.

FRAMEWORK THEMES

GOAL

SG-5 Ensure downtown has a diversity of housing opportunities at different price points.

ACTIONS

SA-19 Purchase land with the intent to develop for increased housing diversity downtown.

SA-20 Issue requests for qualifications for the disposition of appropriate city-owned properties downtown with the requirement that affordable/workforce housing be included in the development or provided nearby.

SA-21 Coordinate with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) in the development of future Qualified Allocation Plans to make downtown locations for Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects more competitive and feasible.

SA-22 Develop specific development plans for city-owned parcels and issue RFPs for affordable or mixed-income housing for homeownership and rental.

SA-23 Study the creation of a downtown housing benefit district, which would commit a percentage of the tax increment from new luxury housing to underwrite the construction of affordable units in and near downtown.

GOAL

SG-6 Partner with non-profits and Wake County to address homelessness and work to facilitate housing for the homeless population.

ACTIONS

SA-24 Identify sites in close proximity to the future homeless services facility suitable for expanding the supply of affordable permanent housing options in collaboration with Wake County.

SA-25 Examine possible sites and alternative facility designs for a long-term homeless services facility.

SA-26 Explore Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing for a downtown site, such as on a portion of the city-owned land east of Moore Square.

GOAL

SG-7 Develop south end of downtown for a major regionally significant mixed-use development, tourism, or convention center expansion.

ACTIONS

SA-27 Create a bold urban design plan for a cultural/entertainment district that encompasses the Convention Center, Red Hat Amphitheater, and the Duke Energy Center.

SA-28 Transform the Red Hat Amphitheater into a high-quality, long-term open space and entertainment asset for downtown.

SA-29 Develop a plan for the development, marketing, and disposition of sites 2 and 3.

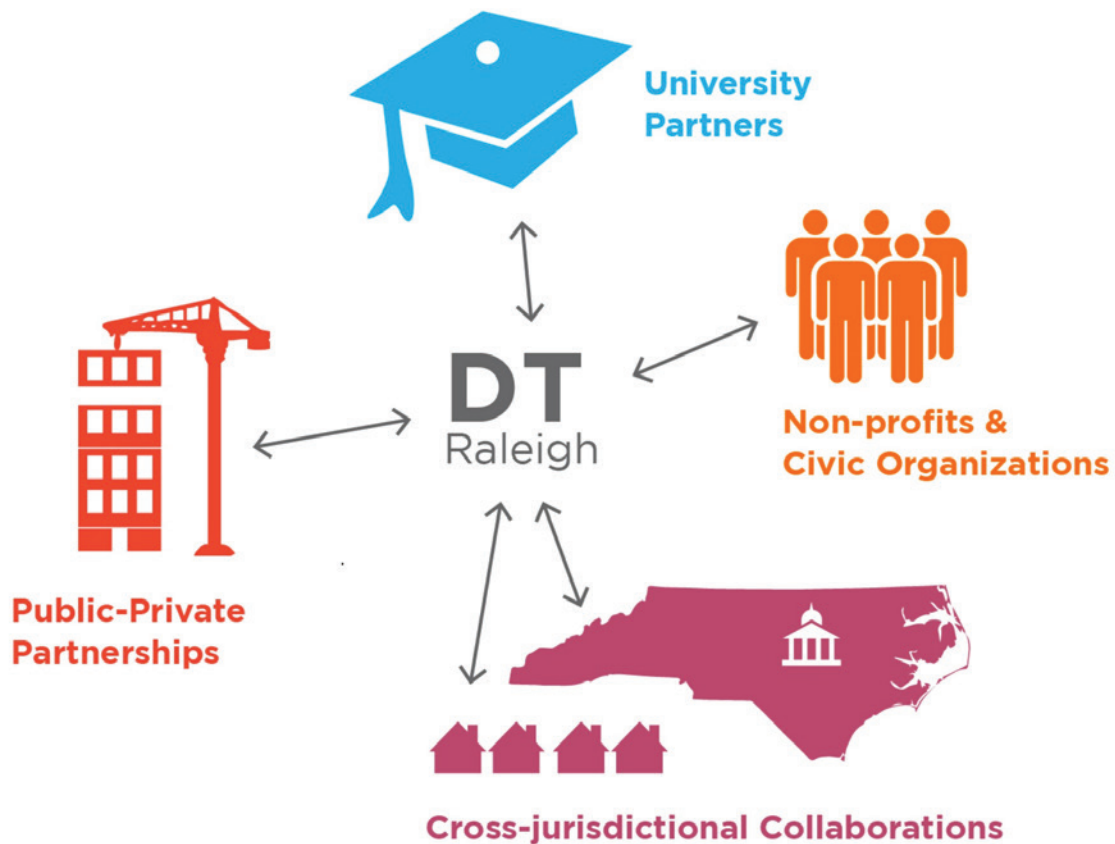
SA-30 Develop a public-private partnership and a plan for the mega-block between Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and South Streets that includes a shared vision, development phasing and financing mechanisms.

SA-31 Attract a headquarters hotel to meet the demands of expanding tourism.

LINK

Network and Partner

Bring together institutional, public, and private partners to bring downtown's shared vision to life.



The next generation of development, parks, and connectivity downtown will require teamwork from many different groups. The goal of “Link” is to bring together institutions, the private sector, and public partners to accelerate the implementation of the downtown vision. Developers, universities, non-profits, city departments, the state government, local businesses, and startups can all help enhance the “Raleigh Experience.” All will have a hand in determining how the character of downtown can reflect the innovation and culture in Raleigh while remaining “real” to its cultural roots.

FRAMEWORK THEMES

GOAL

LG-1 Create strong partnerships with allied public agencies to accelerate implementation of mutually beneficial projects that enhance livability in downtown.

ACTIONS

LA-1 Create a collaborative city and state partnership to assist the N.C. Department of Administration in developing a plan and program for the Capital District that will transform it into a vital connected mixed-use area.

LA-2 Assist the N.C. Department of Administration by contributing to fund a master plan for the Capital District.

LA-3 Contribute to the reformation of the Capital Planning Commission and assign a staff member(s).

LA-4 Provide event and programming services to the state that will help manage and encourage increased public use of Halifax Mall.

LA-5 Assist N.C. Department of Administration (in collaboration with Preservation NC) in revising or removing the Blount Street Commons Planned Development District to achieve/promote redevelopment.

LA-6 Partner with N.C. Department of Transportation and railroads to maintain key connectivity across railroad corridors in advance of future rail projects.

GOAL

LG-2 Partner with downtown universities to enhance their campuses and create a better built environment for faculty, staff, and students.

ACTIONS

LA-7 Work with Shaw University to attract retail development on campus property south of Moore Square.

LA-8 Assist William Peace University with master plan for Seaboard Station properties that maintains local business emphasis and promotes its vitality and allows for future growth of this retail center.

GOAL

LG-3 Establish partnerships with local nonprofits to promote and implement the Downtown Experience Plan.

ACTIONS

LA-9 Identify staff resources that focus on implementation of the plan.

LA-10 Create a task force of City staff, Downtown Raleigh Alliance staff, and Advisory Committee members that focus on the implementation of the 10-year plan.

LA-11 Partner with Downtown Raleigh Alliance to update the brand for downtown in a way that is consistent with the vision of the Downtown Experience Plan.

LA-12 Encourage daytime traffic through continued targeted promotions and other advertising strategies in districts where it is lacking.

GOAL

LG-4 Partner with local businesses, landowners, and developers on key private property improvements that will advance the implementation of priority projects.

ACTIONS

LA-13 Work with AT&T to transform the facade of their building on McDowell Street into a site for public art.

LA-14 Partner with the property owner to reactivate City Market as an eclectic retail anchor.

LA-15 Explore the expansion of the downtown municipal services district north into the North End District, and west into the east side of Saint Mary's Street.

LA-16 Partner with the property owners to create a development strategy for the mega-block between South Saunders Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and Salisbury and South Streets.

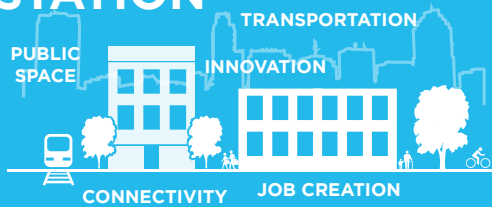
GLENWOOD GREEN



NORTH END

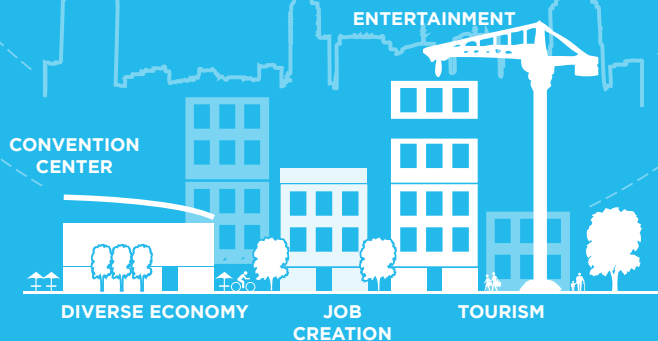


NASH SQUARE | RALEIGH UNION STATION



Raleigh Experience

MOORE SQUARE



GATEWAY CENTER

3

CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS

GATEWAY CENTER

A large-scale convention, tourism, employment, and entertainment destination.

NORTH END

Completing an urban neighborhood.

MOORE SQUARE

Great civic spaces in the heart of the city.

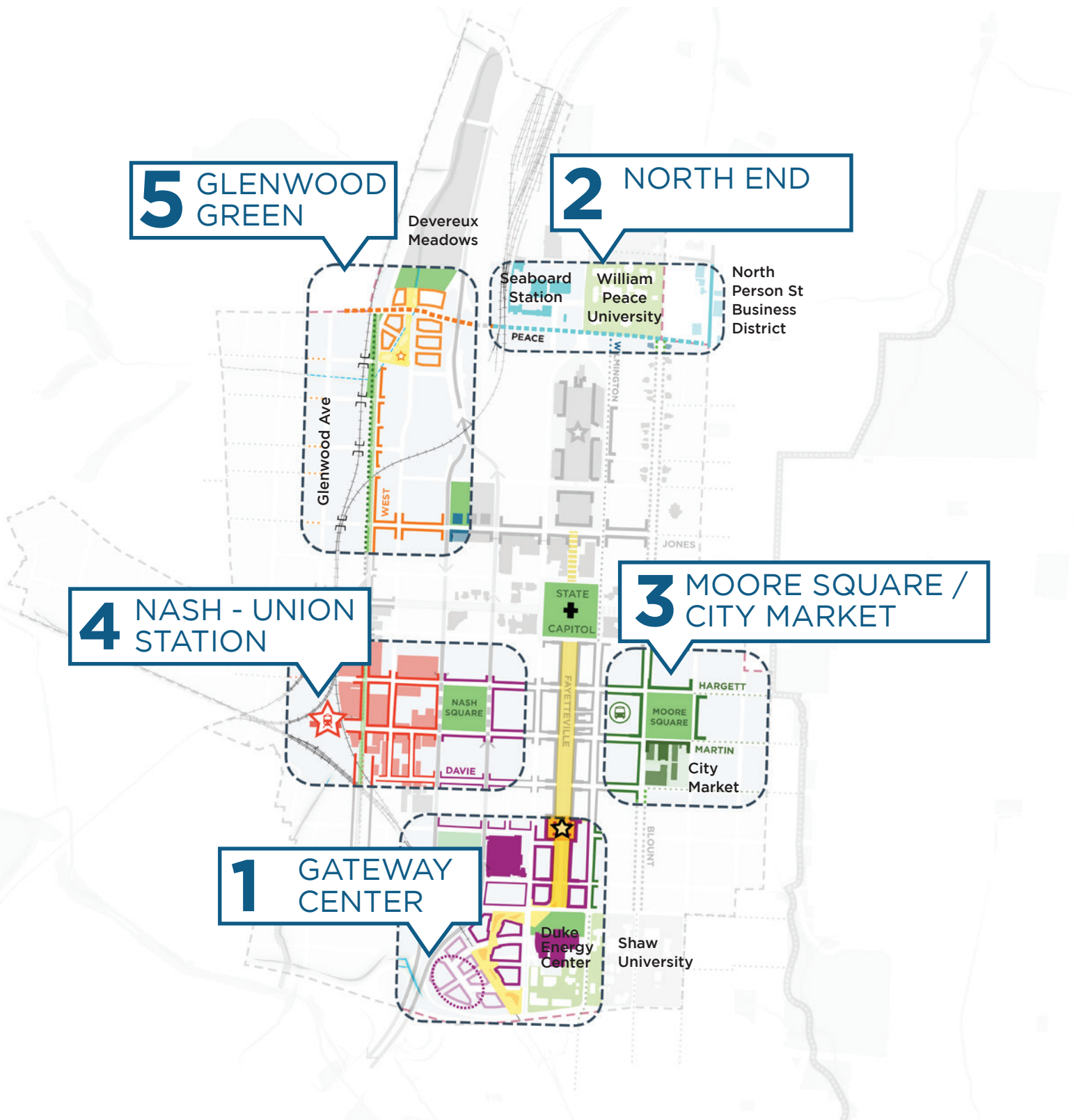
NASH SQUARE/ RALEIGH UNION STATION

Where transportation, innovation, and gracious public space connect.

GLENWOOD GREEN

Downtown's most well-known district gains depth.

CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS



CHAPTER THREE

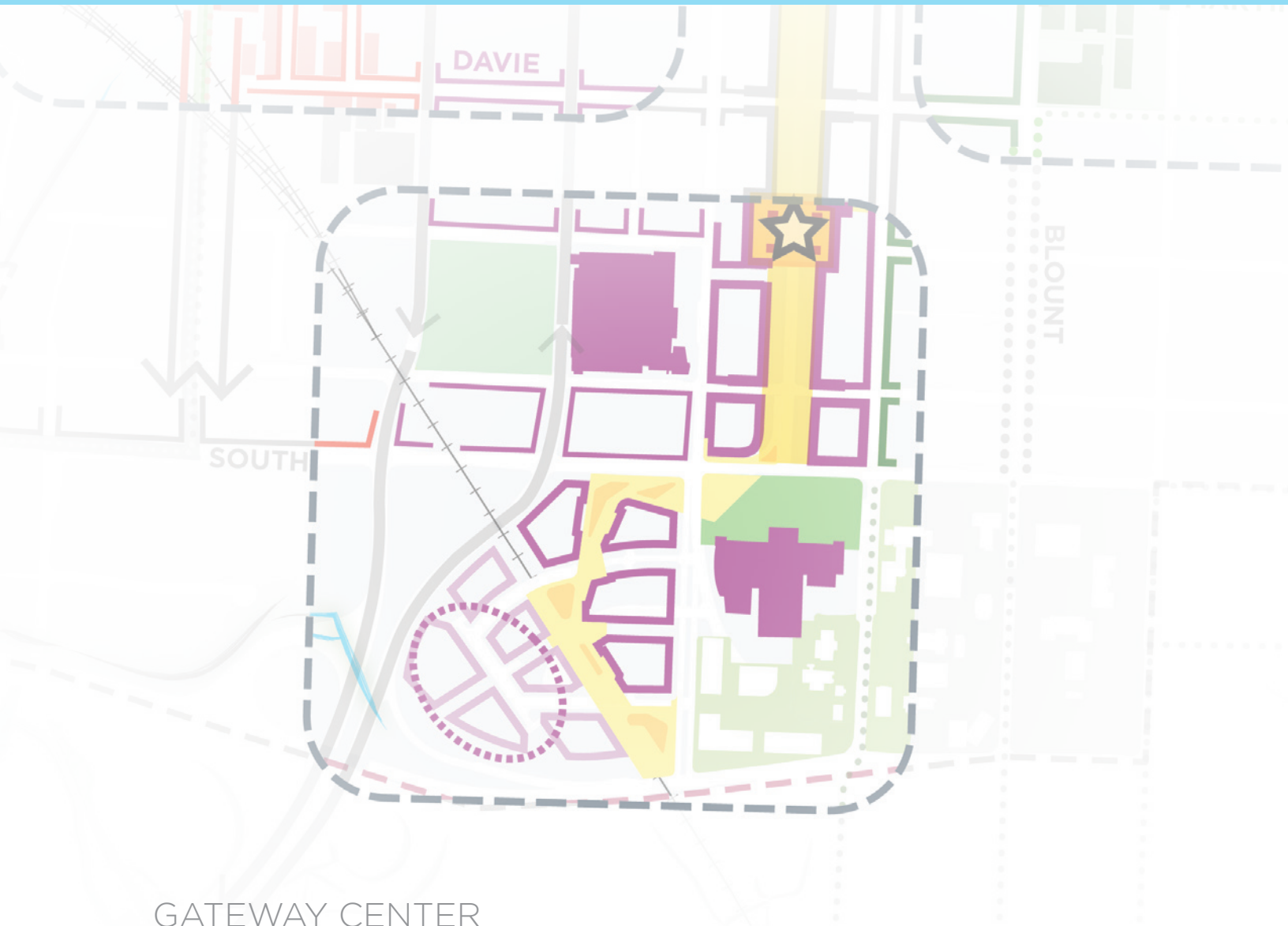
CATALYTIC

PROJECT AREAS

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Experience Plan has established a long list of goals and resulting actions, but it is important to illustrate how these diverse actions blend to create a built environment that aspires to meet our vision for downtown. Five areas of downtown have been identified to serve as an example of how the actions translate into physical form. While these focus areas are not exhaustive in terms of every block or district of downtown, these five project areas establish a set of implementation priorities.

CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS



GATEWAY CENTER

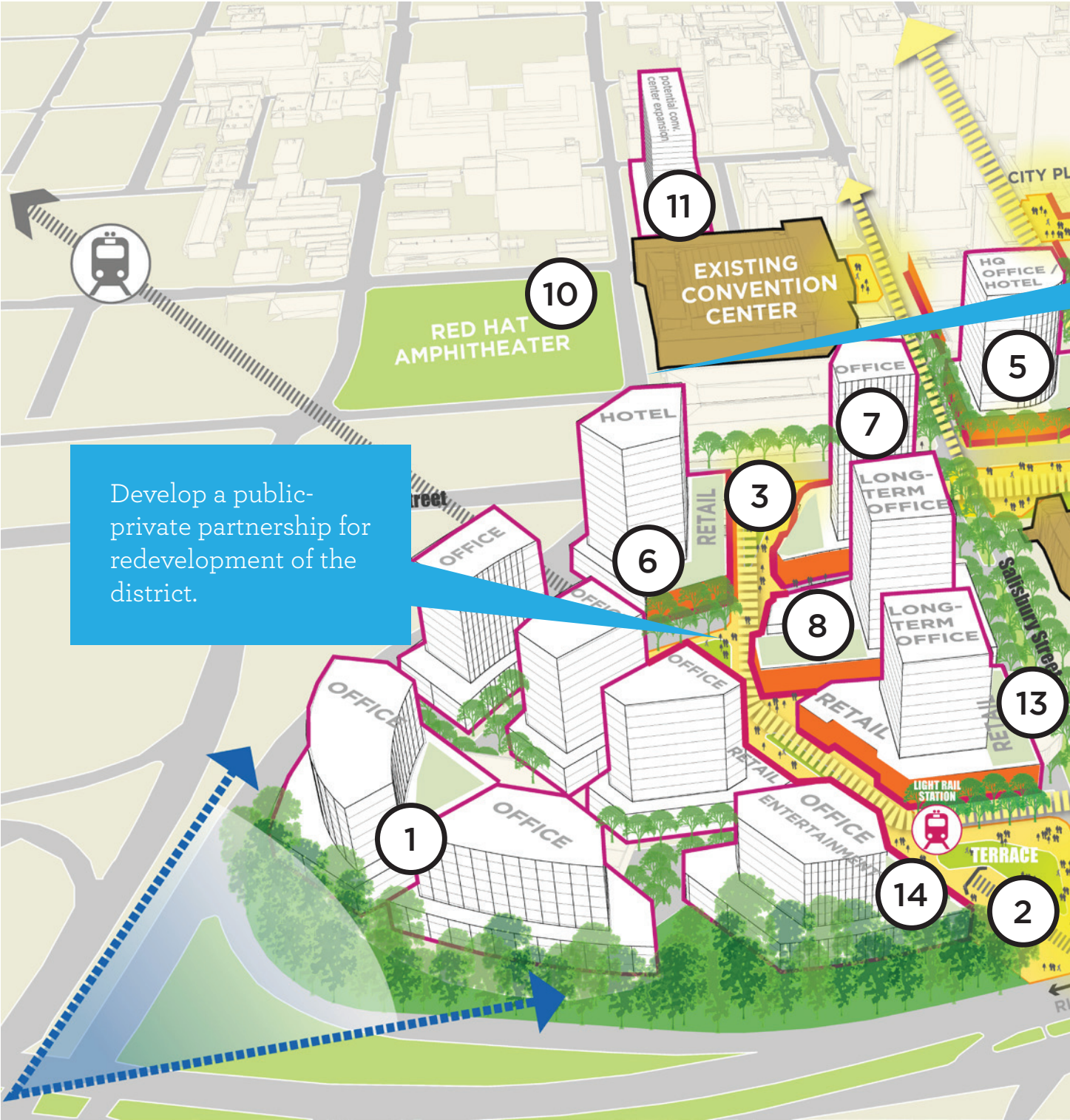
On most of its edges, downtown borders existing stable and historic neighborhoods. Accordingly, downtown must primarily expand up rather than out, through the incremental redevelopment of parking lots and underutilized parcels, of which there are many. However, on downtown's southern edge the opportunity exists to extend downtown development by several city blocks, facilitated by large parcels, consolidated ownership, and city-owned property.

Coined as "Gateway Center," this area is the only part of downtown capable of accommodating multiple blocks of large-footprint mixed-use development. Its proximity to the Convention Center and Performing Arts Center would naturally lend its future to expanding tourism and entertainment-related uses, such as a large-scale

sports or cultural facility, additional hotels, or a campus of related businesses. This expansion comes with significant changes to the public realm, and street and transportation network. A connection to future commuter and rail-based transit is contemplated where the existing rail corridor passes through the area. A realignment of South Salisbury Street and the potential conversion of South Salisbury and South Wilmington Streets to two-way traffic will greatly increase the area's connectivity improving some of the most unsafe intersections, opening up safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access from the Rocky Branch Greenway and neighborhoods immediately south of downtown.

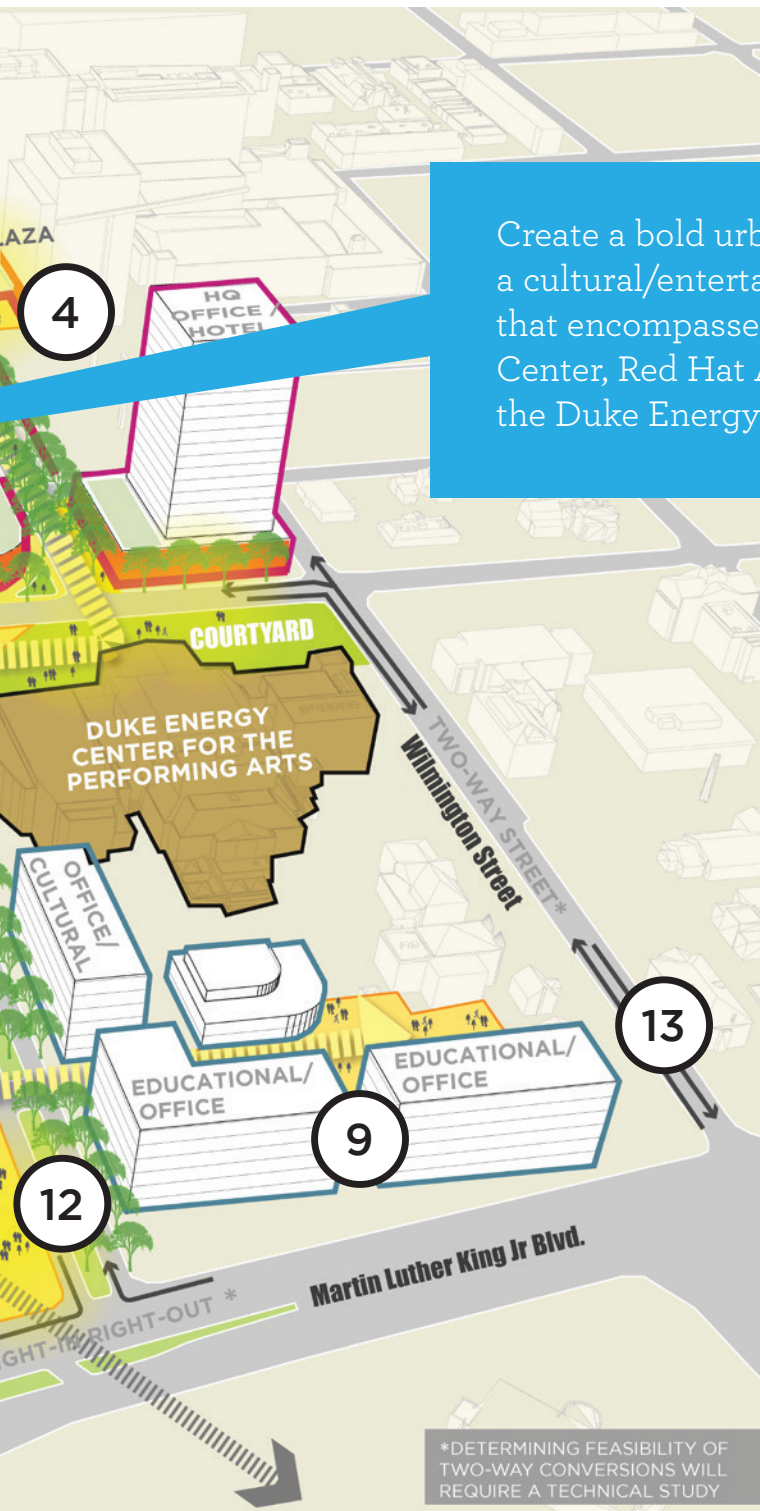
GATEWAY CENTER

OPTION 1: Urban Innovation Center



These illustrations are intended to inspire new development but should not be seen as dictating use, height, or form.

CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS



Create a bold urban design plan for a cultural/entertainment district that encompasses the Convention Center, Red Hat Amphitheater and the Duke Energy Center.

LEGEND

1. Urban innovation campus
2. Plaza improves gateway to realigned Salisbury Street
3. Central plaza/pedestrian mall through new downtown cultural, tourism, or innovation district
4. Headquarters office space or other significant use
5. Ground floor design improves pedestrian flow from Fayetteville Street towards new district
6. Potential hotel location, with ground floor active-use
7. Potential office development, with ground floor active-use
8. Long-term office, with ground floor active use
9. Educational campus or additional office development
10. Improvements at Red Hat Amphitheater
11. Potential convention center expansion site
12. Realigned Salisbury Street
13. Potential conversion to two-way street
14. Potential transit station location within development

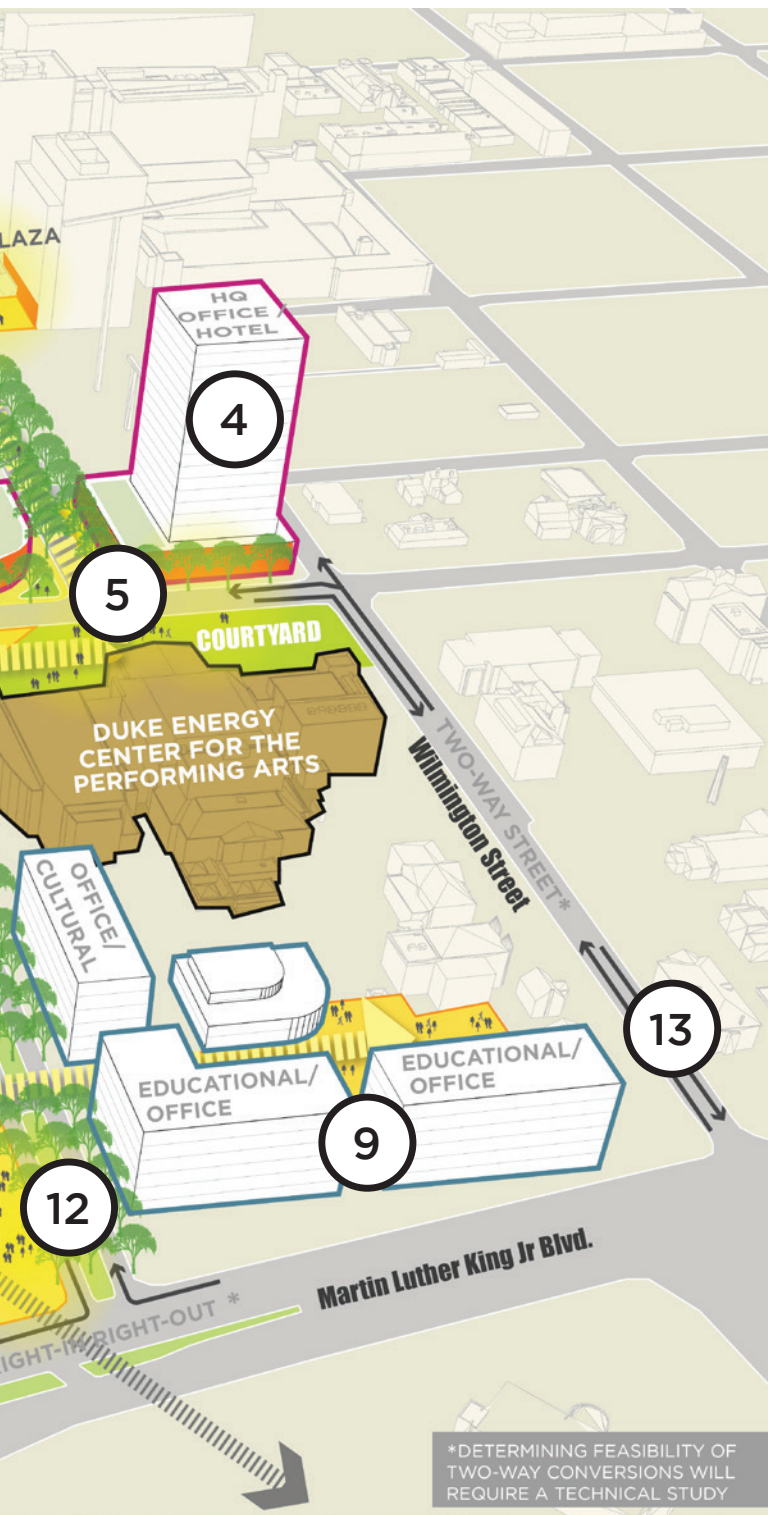
GATEWAY CENTER

OPTION 2: Cultural/Entertainment/Sporting Center



These illustrations are intended to inspire new development but should not be seen as dictating use, height, or form.

CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS



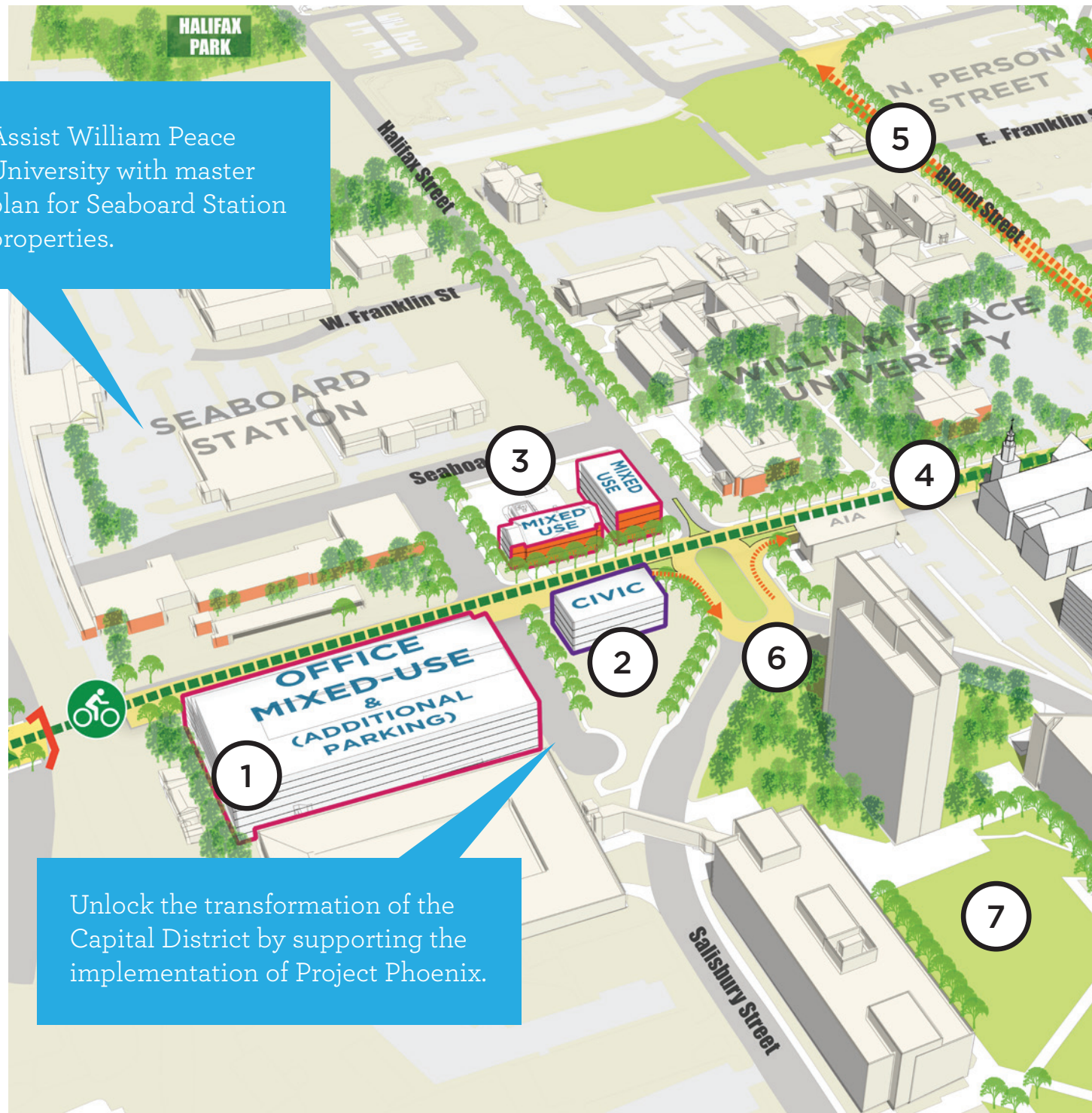
LEGEND

1. Cultural/entertainment/sporting center
2. Plaza improves gateway to realigned Salisbury Street
3. Central plaza/pedestrian mall through new downtown cultural, tourism, or innovation district
4. Headquarters office space or other significant use
5. Ground floor design improves pedestrian flow from Fayetteville Street towards new district
6. Potential hotel location, with ground floor active-use
7. Potential office development, with ground floor active-use
8. Long-term office, with ground floor active use
9. Educational campus or additional office development
10. Improvements at Red Hat Amphitheater
11. Potential convention center expansion site
12. Realigned Salisbury Street
13. Potential conversion to two-way street
14. Potential transit station location within development

NORTH END PROJECT

Completing an Urban Neighborhood

Assist William Peace University with master plan for Seaboard Station properties.

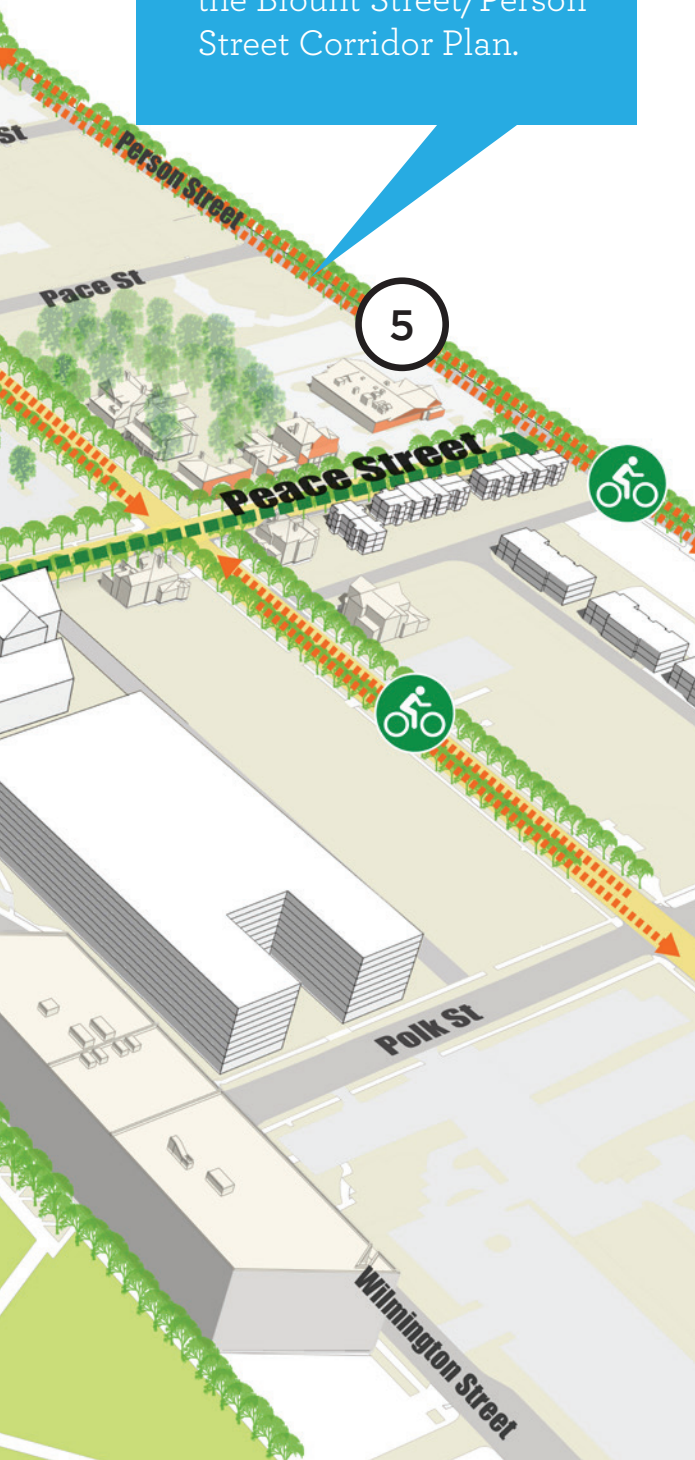


Unlock the transformation of the Capital District by supporting the implementation of Project Phoenix.

These illustrations are intended to inspire new development but should not be seen as dictating use, height, or form.

CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS

Implement the recommendations of the Blount Street/Person Street Corridor Plan.



In contrast to the large-scale redevelopment and expansion of downtown contemplated in Gateway Center, the vision for the North End of downtown, comprised of the Seaboard and Person Street commercial centers, is more on the scale of urban acupuncture.

The North End is home to historic anchor institutions like the William Peace University campus as well as contemporary landmarks like the AIA Center for Architecture and Design and the new Holy Trinity Anglican Church. With Blount Street Commons and the North Person business district gaining steam, change on the North End will be focused on a transformation of its main streets to create a complete and connected urban neighborhood. The spine of this district will hinge on a renovated Peace Street, where pedestrians and bicycles will comfortably and safely connect along a street lined with new buildings and generous sidewalks, rather than empty parking lots and dark bridge underpasses.

Peace Street will finally provide a direct link from historic Oakwood to Glenwood South, a distance of only a few blocks but only lightly used because of the poor pedestrian environment. Perhaps even more importantly, additional safe and accommodating places for pedestrians to cross Peace Street are necessary, removing a barrier that divides the district from downtown. A second major change to how people move around the North End will come in the road diet and streetscape improvements—and possible two-way conversion—associated with North Person and North Blount Streets. Capitalizing on the momentum generated by the main street character of North Person Street, these streetscape projects will overcome the perceived isolation of an important and growing district of our downtown.

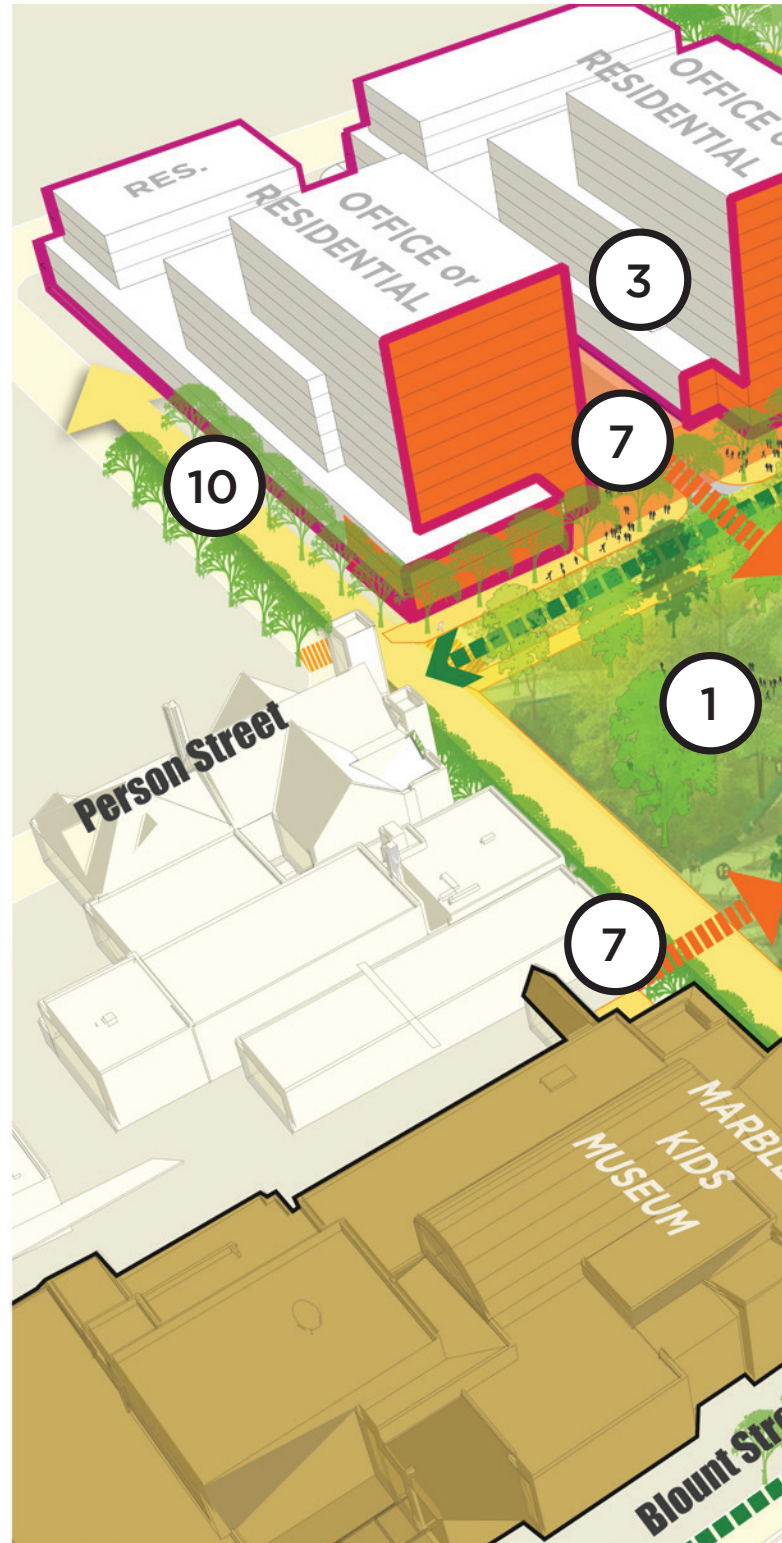
LEGEND

1. Potential office development, with ground floor active-use
2. Potential expansion site for government-related development with ground floor active-use
3. Potential mixed-use development with active ground floor design to further support the street
4. Multimodal streetscape improvements along Peace Street
5. Approved streetscape improvements including the potential conversion to two-way traffic on Blount and Person Streets
6. Realigned intersection at Peace and Wilmington, Salisbury, and Halifax Streets
7. Activate Halifax Mall with programming and amenities for downtown residents

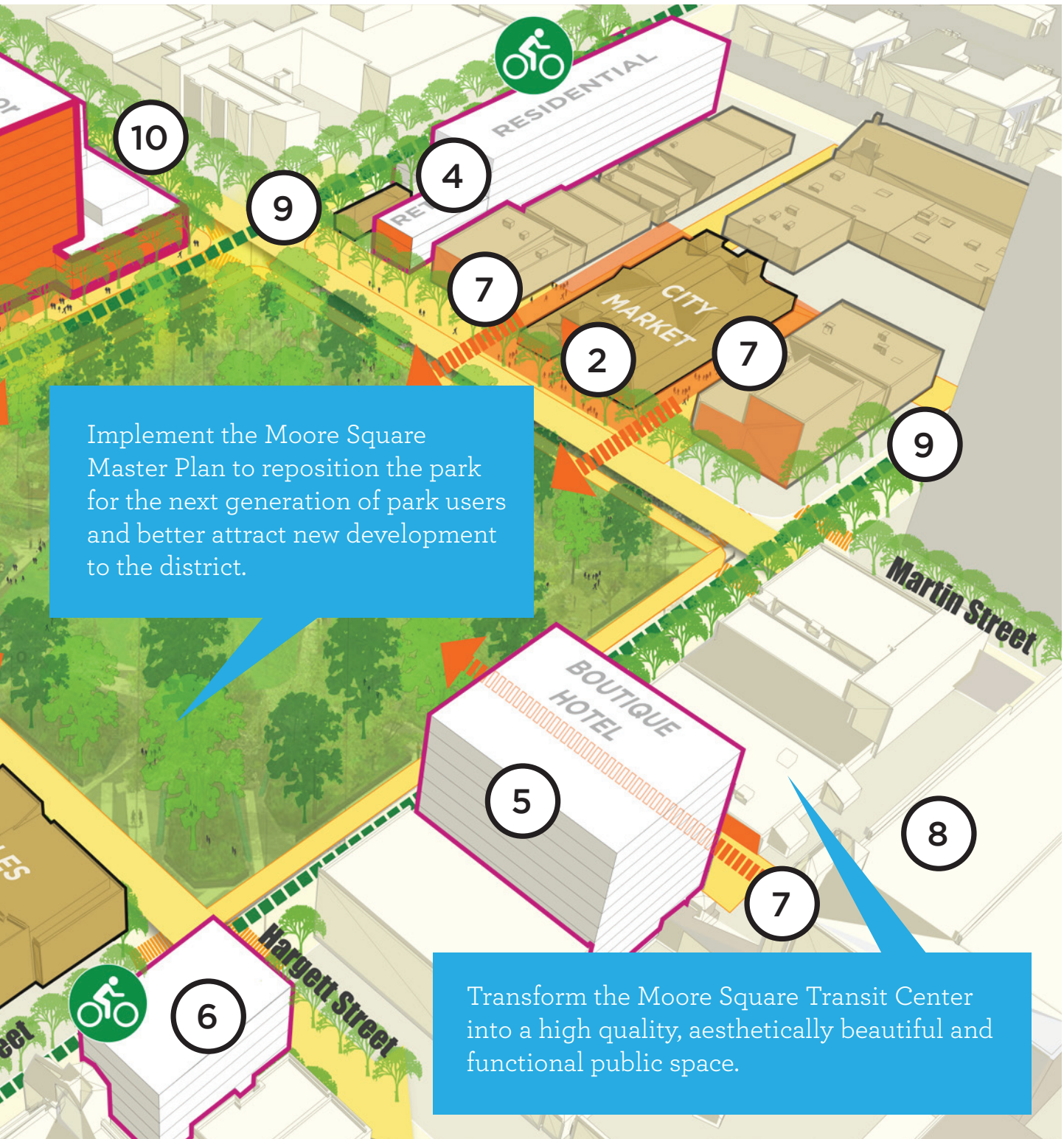
Great civic spaces in the heart of the city

A renovated Moore Square will accommodate children and adults alike, strengthening one of the district's most successful anchors, Marbles Kids Museum. The renovated Transit Station will incorporate new public spaces and improved circulation that will create an inviting mid-block passage linking Fayetteville Street and Exchange Plaza to Moore Square. In conjunction with the public investment in its public space, the redevelopment of city-owned parcels to the south, east and west of the square will add a variety of uses to blocks where gaps now exist in the urban fabric. A rejuvenated City Market, one of Raleigh's most unique and cherished areas, will become the destination anchor for the district that links the future to Raleigh's unique past.

1. Moore Square improvements
2. Cobblestone Hall activated year-round
3. Potential office or residential development, with ground-floor active use fronting on park
4. Potential residential location, with active-use fronting on park
5. Potential hotel location
6. Potential infill development site
7. Mid-block pedestrian passages
8. Moore Square Transit Station improvements
9. Multimodal improvements on Person and Blount Streets
10. Hargett and Martin Streets as key pedestrian-oriented links through downtown



CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS



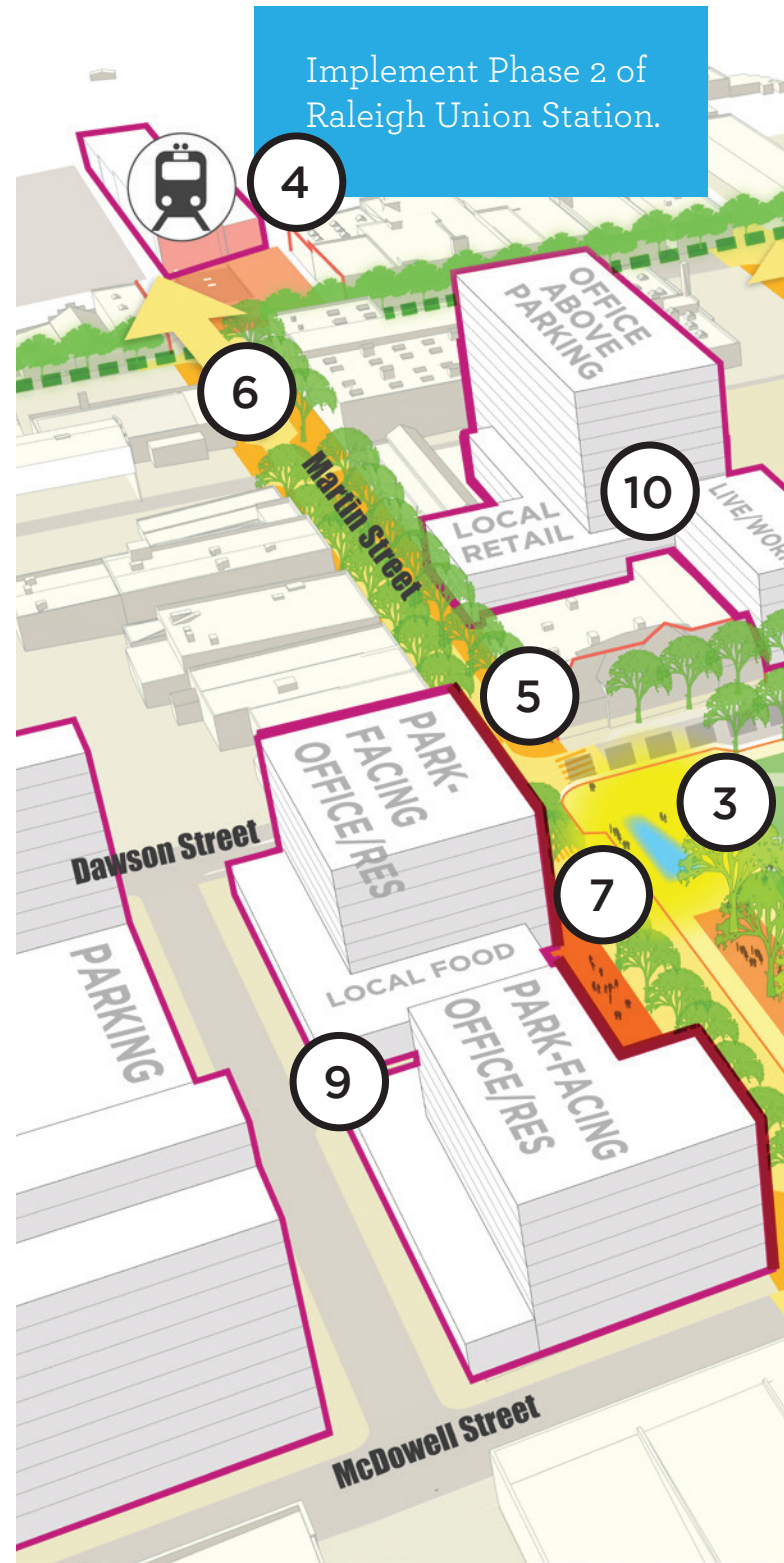
These illustrations are intended to inspire new development but should not be seen as dictating use, height, or form.

NASH SQUARE/ RALEIGH UNION STATION

Where transportation, innovation and gracious public space connect.

The west side of downtown has been booming. Rehabilitation of historic warehouse spaces in the depot district has accommodated some of Raleigh's burgeoning technology cluster while also reinforcing a center of a grassroots design and arts culture. While there has been much activity west of Dawson Street, the east side, centered on Nash Square, has not experienced the same level of reinvestment. The Nash Square-Raleigh Union Station project area capitalizes on Raleigh's future transportation hub, the other extant historic square, and the city-owned properties to the north and west of the square.

A re-visioning of existing city facilities located on the block north of Nash Square will bring a more vibrant mix of uses and street level activity to Hargett Street. A thoughtful renovation of historic Nash Square can add an equal but more contemplative public space to the downtown. Where Moore Square will attract activity to its center, a renovated Nash Square will seek to keep its center a peaceful respite, instead focusing energy and programming on the Hargett and Martin Street edges. Both Hargett and Martin Streets will be designed as the prime pedestrian-oriented retail streets connecting Raleigh Union Station on the west side to Moore Square on the east side. These investments in major public infrastructure will help spur private redevelopment on the blocks south and east of the square.

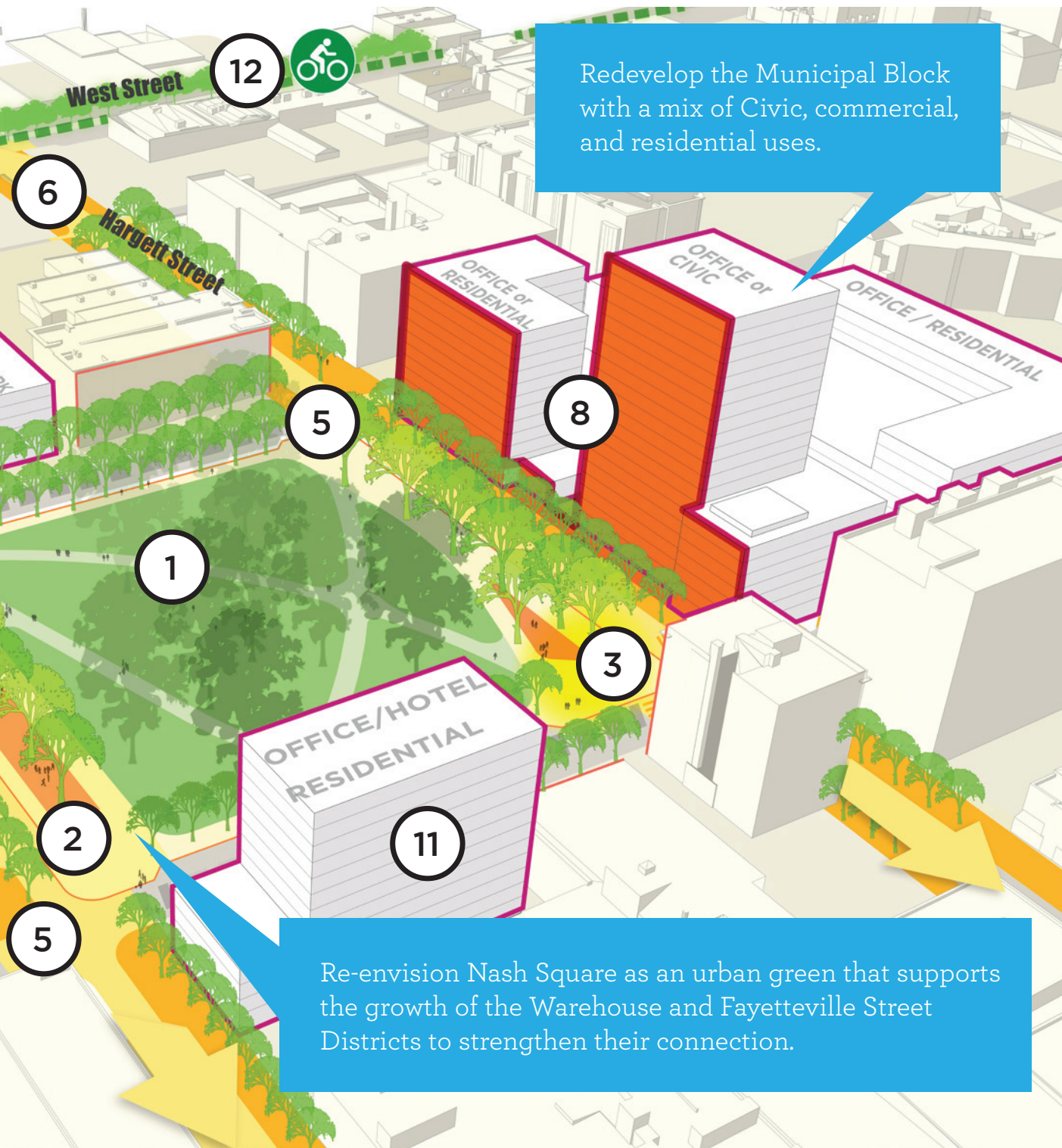


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CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS

LEGEND

1. Reconfigured paths to create welcoming, more open interior
2. Outdoor seating along active edge
3. Entry plaza
4. Union Station
5. Improvements to make intersections more pedestrian-friendly; traffic-calming along park edges
6. Hargett and Martin Streets as key pedestrian-oriented links through Downtown
7. Building setback for outdoor dining
8. Redevelopment opportunity
9. Office or residential redevelopment opportunity, with active ground-floor uses along park
10. Infill redevelopment opportunity
11. Hotel or other infill development opportunity
12. West Street Greenway Connector and cycle track



GLENWOOD GREEN PROJECT

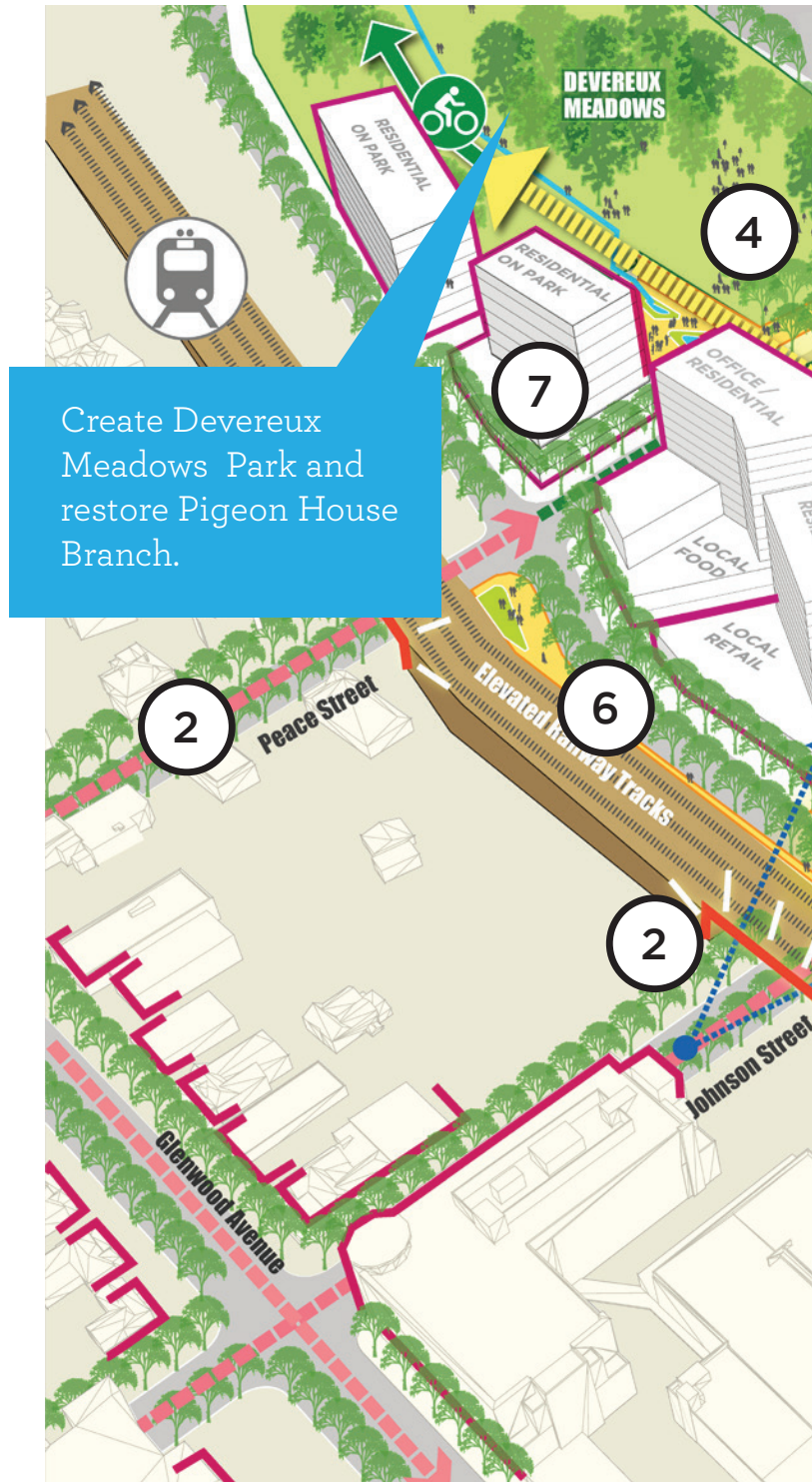
Downtown's most well-known district gains depth.

The success that Glenwood South has experienced has been focused on just a few blocks that remain isolated from adjacent districts and lack the civic infrastructure found in other areas of downtown. New projects are extending the energy to North Boylan Avenue, but by far the most significant development opportunities are found to the east along West and Harrington Streets.

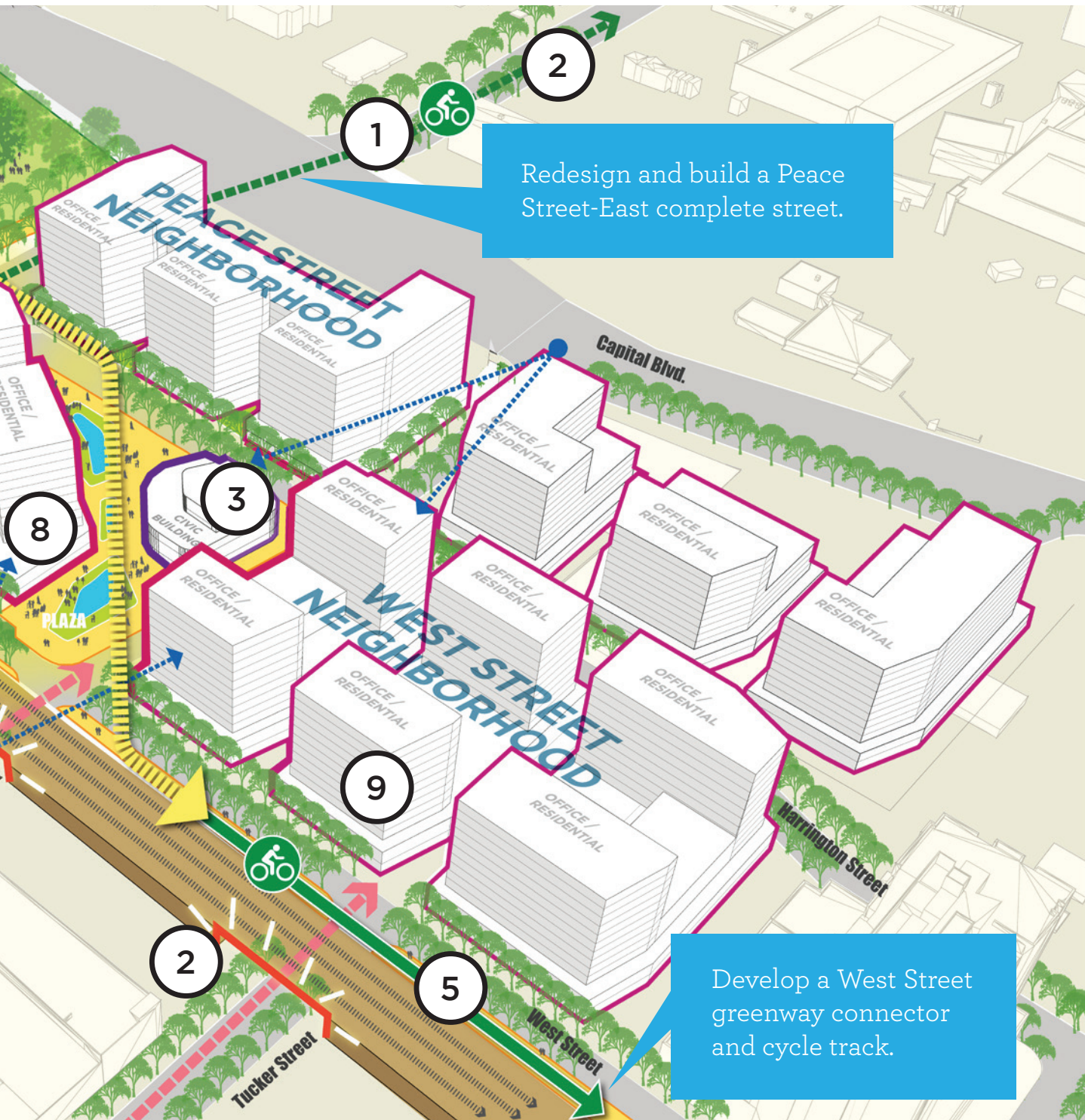
To capitalize on these opportunities, the Glenwood Green project focuses on creating a new urban park, Devereux Meadows, centered along a restoration of Pigeon House Branch. The further daylighting of this forgotten urban stream will become the civic spine organizing future private development on the eastern side of the district. An improved block pattern being created by the Peace Street bridge replacement project will create new development sites. Increased connectivity by means of a new urban greenway connection from the north following the rail corridor along West Street will connect Glenwood to not only Devereux Meadows and Raleigh Union Station, but eventually to the Rocky Brach Greenway in the south and the Crabtree Creek greenway in the north. Ultimately, getting to and from this district by walking, cycling, or driving will be safe, convenient and inviting in any direction, making Glenwood South a model for multi-modal connectivity.

LEGEND

1. Peace Street improvements: to make safer and more welcoming for pedestrians and bicyclists
2. Gateways: special lighting or other feature
3. Civic building
4. Link to Devereux Meadows
5. West Street cycle track
6. Linear park
7. Residential buildings facing onto new park
8. Mixed-use development: ground floor active-use with residential above
9. New residential buildings



CATALYTIC PROJECT AREAS



These illustrations are intended to inspire new development but should not be seen as dictating use, height, or form.

NASH SQUARE/ RALEIGH UNION STATION



GATEWAY CENTER



RETAIL STRATEGY



4

FINANCING + BUILDING PLAN: An Implementation Strategy

CHAPTER FOUR

FINANCING +

BUILDING PLAN:

An Implementation Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Experience Plan has established a vision for the next decade and outlined a series of small and large action items that will accomplish its aspirational goals, but as with any plan, its success will depend on a solid plan for how to get it done.

The implementation framework outlined in this section identifies strategies that will help us advance the key actions in three initiatives essential to the Experience Plan:

1. Activate the Warehouse District around a revitalized Nash Square.
2. Develop a framework for building out the Fayetteville District at Gateway Center.
3. Strengthen downtown Raleigh's retail environment.

The remaining actions and initiatives that have been described and illustrated in the Experience Plan are no less important but will be initiated through the amendment of existing adopted plans, more discrete and pinpointed initiatives, and financing mechanisms that are in place, such as the Capital Improvement Program.

NASH SQUARE/RALEIGH UNION STATION

The Nash Square/Raleigh Union Station area envisions a reconfigured square with a restful interior but actively programmed edges. New mixed-use buildings with over one million square feet will surround the square. Successful implementation of this vision will require careful phasing, innovative financial structures, and deliberate programming and design.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS, PROGRAMMING AND FUNDING

Action 1: Clarify Function of the Square

The centerpiece of the Nash Square/Raleigh Union Station Catalytic Project area is the revitalization of the square into a more active space while recognizing its historic character. A community planning process should be initiated to generate ideas and design concepts for re-purposing the square. A variety of interventions, including public art and programming, could be appropriate. A cultural landscape report should be a part of the due diligence phase of the planning process.

Action 2: Develop Public Open Space Capital Funding Approach

The design process will produce a cost estimate for re-purposing the square. [If Moore Square is a guide, the cost will be significant, yet in terms of the amount of new development the park will serve, even a significant investment can produce a positive return.] The surest avenue to funding the capital improvements is likely to include funding for Nash Square in a future general obligation bond referendum, supplemented by developer contributions garnered through the potential disposition of adjacent city-owned property; and corporate grants, and philanthropic contributions.

Other avenues for funding capital costs include the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund; exploring an open space assessment for downtown whereby developers could pay into a fund to support capital improvements to parks in downtown Raleigh; or value capture mechanisms whereby the city could harness future increases in property tax revenue to fund capital improvements. However these sources are not expected to provide a significant source of funding.

Action 3: Develop Operations and Maintenance Funding Approach for Public Open Space

A cost estimate for operating and maintaining the square must be prepared. To fund Nash Square's ongoing operations and maintenance, the city should look to a combination of baseline city parks funding; earned income from concessions, private events, and other leases; and contributed income from corporate sponsorship and individual philanthropy. Value capture mechanisms, whereby property tax revenues generated by the revitalized square are captured to fund ongoing costs, could be explored, but are not likely to be significant revenue generators.

Action 4: Determining the Public Open Space Governance Structure

The revitalization of the square will generate responsibilities—such as programming, fundraising, and marketing. A spectrum of governance structures are available to handle these functions. Options to consider are: a special parks district led by public officials; a quasi-public municipal development corporation; and an independent not-for-profit management corporation with oversight from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) Department that supplements ongoing PRCR management. With Moore Square's pending revitalization, an opportunity exists for the creation of a new special-purpose entity covering the needs of both squares, including programming, community volunteering, and fundraising.

DISPOSITION OF CITY-OWNED REAL ESTATE

A full assessment of the opportunity associated with city-owned property surrounding Nash Square requires determining both redevelopment options and optimal locational alternatives for the city uses currently located there. Permanently locating the city's functions in new development within the district would provide a critical anchor tenant and continue the area's legacy as the home of municipal government. On the other hand, relocating municipal functions to another district would free land for more private development in the area. Multiple actions will need to be coordinated, including developing a temporary or permanent relocation strategy for city operations; crafting a developer solicitation process; and phasing development in step with the revitalization of Nash Square and build-out of Raleigh Union Station.

Action 1: Refine Vision for Future Uses of the Sites

Several aspects of the mixed-use development program should be further considered. The city cannot achieve its objectives for city-owned sites until it defines what those objectives will be. In addition to potential government and office uses, a large percentage of the space should be allocated to residential uses. Dedicated affordable or workforce housing units should be strongly considered for inclusion. Ground floor retail is also strongly encouraged to complement the active edges of Nash Square.

Action 2: Determine Development Framework and Zoning

The public sector's level of responsibility and control in the redevelopment process is tied to its disposition strategy. In this instance, it is advisable to phase the disposition of city parcels sequentially to individual developers. This strategy would allow the city greater control over the timing of development, and could also enable a significant return to the city for later phases. Coordinating disposition of municipal and privately owned land with a master developer makes less sense given the manageable number of parcels and limited infrastructure needs.

The city should also implement a zoning amendment to codify its development goals for the district. A Planned Development Conditional Use Overlay District would offer regulatory certainty to guide the type of development sought on the parcels.

Action 3: Dispose of Land

The city could either dispose of its land to individual developers through an upset bid process or it could conduct a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process leading to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the parcels. An upset bid process is generally appropriate when there is high probability that the product generated by market forces will align with public sector priorities. The right zoning can encourage certain development outcomes. An upset bid process will also typically yield the highest financial return for the taxpayers. It would not, however, enable the city to craft a public-private development structure for project implementation.

A Request for Qualifications would allow the city to set clear expectations for development in the district, to formulate a public-private development structure, and to specify developer contributions to capital improvements for Nash Square. However, the city's historic lack of capacity to direct this process as effectively as it should constrains the potential benefit. We recommend the city explore options for establishing this capacity, such as an economic development function specialized in real estate transaction services.

Action 4: Deploy Necessary Incentives

Should they prove necessary in the course of negotiations, several tools are available to address funding gaps in the preferred plan, including accepting lesser land payments in return for accomplishing public goals—e.g. affordable or workforce housing—and funding pre-development activities such as site demolition. Synthetic tax increment grants that would be repaid by incremental property tax from the development could also be explored, but would only generate modest revenue for improvements.

GATEWAY CENTER

The Gateway Center envisions a significant new precinct at the southern end of downtown Raleigh. Sites 2 and 3—the existing surface parking lots for the Performing Arts Center at the terminus of Fayetteville Street—are planned to be major commercial or, potentially, hotel uses. Land south of the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts would potentially be developed to accommodate additional Shaw Uni-

versity expansion or additional office, governmental, cultural, or hospitality-related uses, accompanied by large mixed-use development pads created to the west. The district has the potential to accommodate a stadium, arena, or other transformational and civically important use. The plan identifies the potential for 3.9 million square feet of development in the district.

Action 1: Cooperate on Future Vision

A joint vision for the district should be produced that involves the landowners in the district, including Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, the North Carolina Association of Educators, Wake County, Shaw University, and the City of Raleigh. While proactive site assembly is not a prerequisite to redevelopment, a project of this magnitude will require buy-in from other stakeholders that builds momentum for an eventual joint development agreement. The city should begin discussions with other landowners to gauge their interest in participating.

Action 2: Determine Development Phasing

The Gateway Center district includes two discrete opportunities, which are sites 2 and 3, and the larger and more complicated Southern District. The quantity of development planned calls for a timeline likely to extend over multiple phases and even decades.

Sites 2 and 3 represent the final major development opportunities on Fayetteville Street and should be

retained for a significant corporate relocation or other catalytic use. Corporate relocation incentives like Business Investment Grants and Job Development Investment Grants should be considered for deployment. These sites can be redeveloped independent of the disposition of the remainder of the district.

Disposition of the larger parcels that comprise the Gateway Center would be timed around the emergence of a catalytic use on the western portion of the site, such as a sports stadium, arena or convention expansion. Mixed-use buildings on the eastern portion of the site should complement the catalytic use and potentially provide cross-subsidizing revenue.

Action 3: Identify Infrastructure Financing Mechanism

A significant level of infrastructure and site work, including grading, extension of the street grid comprising the final block of Fayetteville Street, and utilities will be necessary. The creation of a new Development Financing District is advisable on the southern parcel. Also known as tax increment financing, a Development Financing District enables future tax increment to fund public improvements.



Under a standard Development Financing District, for up to 30 years, all incremental tax revenues that would otherwise go towards local governments' general expenditures would both securitize the loans and also be pledged to amortizing bonds taken out to finance infrastructure improvements. Under a "synthetic" Development Financing District, the city would implement an installment finance agreement and pledge the infrastructure improvements themselves as security for the loan. In pursuing a Development Financing District, the City of Raleigh should partner with Wake County so that both city and county tax revenues are available for infrastructure. Although this tool does not have a track record of use in Raleigh, the significant potential for value creation and complexity of site infrastructure calls for its exploration as an implementation tool.

Other potential financing mechanisms include a special assessment district, whereby a supplementary tax on property in the district and potentially nearby property could be used to help fund infrastructure, and a joint development agreement with a private partner, whereby a developer would agree to fund infrastructure investments in return for public subsidies in the form of tax abatements or a lower purchase price for the land.

RETAIL STRATEGY

A goal of the Downtown Experience Plan is to establish authentic retail that builds on the vibrant restaurant and entertainment cluster. The plan calls for vibrant corridors along Hargett and Martin Streets, anchored on the east and west by City Market and Raleigh Union Station. This will require strategic application of public sector assistance and direction.

Action 1: Identify a Retail Toolkit

Additional public support could help businesses succeed in downtown locations. Several incentives could assist local entrepreneurs:

- **Recapitalizing the Downtown Loan Pool Program** to benefit emerging local retailers lacking access to capital. A new retail-specific fund could achieve greater impact employed in conjunction with a retail strategy. The revitalized fund could function as a below-market interest loan or grant program assisting with construction and fit-out costs. Threshold requirements should be established to ensure funds are targeted to viable businesses.
- **Expediting the permitting process** by waiving business license fees and expediting applications. The city could provide flexibility to uses such as pop-up shops and other temporary activation efforts.

Action 2: Target Specific Locations for Retail

The city should build upon downtown's existing energy by focusing on blocks in the immediate vicinity of Nash and Moore Squares and on east-west connections with heavy pedestrian traffic.

The city should encourage retail development along targeted corridors through streetscape improvements such as identifiable street lighting, street furniture, and improved wayfinding. The public sector should also introduce creative small-scale urban interventions such as public art installations and parklets along portions of the retail corridors lacking in vibrancy. Allowing pop-up cafes and shops, food trucks, and mobile vendors will also activate more isolated parts of the retail corridors.

Action 3: Attract Authentic Retailers

The community has voiced a preference for unique, local retail that contributes to an authentic sense of place. When the city disposes of municipally owned property, it should stipulate a preference for smaller retail spaces, roughly 1,000 to 3,000 square feet, that can accommodate these types of tenants. Organizations like the Downtown Raleigh Alliance can also help build a distinctive retail environment downtown by coordinating a tenanting strategy with property owners. In Kendall Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for example, a broker-led strategy helped convince property owners that more authentic retail would add long-term value to neighborhood real estate. A unified approach to local tenanting can drive increased values for upper floor uses that benefit from proximity to vibrant retail. Close coordination with the broker community and major downtown property owners will be required to overcome the inclination to select tenants based purely on rent maximization. Given that the amount of upper floor space in a downtown is vastly larger than ground floor space, even modest increases in upper floor rents can more than offset reduced rents at the ground level.

Action 4: Recruit a Grocery Store

Attracting an urban neighborhood-sized grocery store is a key component of the retail attraction strategy. The success of grocery stores is dependent on a critical mass of residents and office workers. While residential development is growing exponentially, a good retail strategy should also complement the attraction of new companies to downtown that will attract more workers.

The public sector could pursue one of two strategies for attracting a downtown grocery store. The first option would be to incorporate the preference for a grocery store into property disposition. An urban-format grocer should be located on a parcel accessible to existing downtown residents and workers, as well as developments in the pipeline. The city could help facilitate development by accepting a lower offer for the publically owned land than would be tendered with more profitable ground floor uses.

Potential locations for a grocery store using this method include:

- One of the underutilized or city-owned parcels surrounding Nash Square.
- Hillsborough Street parcels north of Nash Square.
- One of the underutilized or City-owned parcels surrounding Moore Square.

The Moore Square parcels likely represent the best opportunity for an urban grocery. With the delivery of the residential projects in the pipeline, the Moore Square area will have the highest residential density of about 6,500 residents within one-half mile versus 5,000 in Nash Square. Other factors that favor Moore Square include the vitality that will result from the square's redevelopment; its greater distance from existing grocery options in Cameron Village; and its ability to serve existing established neighborhoods east and south of downtown.

The second option is to activate an under-utilized property, such as City Market or Stones Warehouse, as a public market, similar to Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia or Eastern Market or Union Market in Washington, D.C. This option would require the existing landowner to either reposition the property for lease or sell to an entity that would reactivate the space. A non-profit operating corporation could then be established by the city to manage the market.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The City of Raleigh is committed to the implementation of the ideas and actions described in this plan. Many, if not all, of the actions require considerable collaboration between multiple departments within the city, as well as, partner organizations, other governmental units and private organizations, landowners and residents. A timeline and responsible party will be identified for each action and consolidated into an easily accessible matrix. In order to coordinate this diverse group of organizations, we will create a team of city staff, individuals from allied organizations and residents to regularly guide the implementation of this plan.

A PLAN CRAFTED FOR RALEIGH

Over the course of 12 months, hundreds of people, passionate about the future of downtown have come together to craft a compelling vision for our city center, all focused on how each resident, worker, maker, and visitor—both young and old—will experience the place we love. Our aspirations have been set high in this plan, because we cherish the authenticity of what we have built and nurtured into the successful downtown we enjoy today. We are determined to successfully guide its evolution into a model of hospitality, vitality, and prosperity for the City of Raleigh.

Please continue to show your support as we develop the actions in this plan to create a downtown “of its PLACE and for its PEOPLE.”



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